

THE
SATURDAY REVIEW
OF
POLITICS, LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

No. 3,192 Vol. 122.

30 December 1916.

[REGISTERED AS A] 6d.
NEWSPAPER.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
NOTES OF THE WEEK	609	VERSE:		CORRESPONDENCE—continued.	
LEADING ARTICLES:		Sea-spell By E. M. B.	618	The Drama	622
The Allied Powers and Peace	612	CORRESPONDENCE:		Ontario and Alcohol	622
A Century of the London School	613	Our Friend and Ally Italy (Raf- faello Piccoli)	618	The Songs of Serbia	622
The Coming Newspaper?	614	Manipulative Surgery (Major- General Desmond O'Callaghan)	619	REVIEWS:	
The Great War: Appreciation (No. 126). By Brigadier-General Stone	614	"Saying, Peace, Peace" (Harold Hodge)	619	A Great Litterateur	623
MIDDLE ARTICLES:		America and the War	621	[Reviewed by W. H. Chesson]	
New Lamps for Old. By an Officer in Kitchener's Army	615	Prayers for President Wilson in the Temple Church	621	War-Broken and Witty	624
A Note on Style	616	The Maid Marvellous	621	A Russian Traveller's Tales	626
East and West. By Lord Dunsany	617			[Reviewed by Bishop Frodsham]	
				The Jew in Fiction	628
				Latest Books	628

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

"I detest croaking. If true, it is unpatriotic, and, if false, worse. My only ambition is to be remembered, if remembered at all, as one who knew and valued national independence, and would maintain it in the present struggle to the last man and the last guinea, tho' the last guinea were my own property, and the last man my own son."

—Walter Scott in War-Time.

By far the most important and pertinent utterance of the week is the Order of the Day which the Tsar issued to all his soldiers and sailors on Christmas Day. In its massive sincerity and strength it is at once of fine literary quality and finely representative of the Russian people. By speaking thus directly and candidly the Tsar has done a great service to the cause of all the united Allies. He traces events from the beginning of the war, when Germany attacked "after secretly preparing over a long period to enslave all the nations of Europe". Reverses due to inequalities in the technical aids of warfare did not break the spirit of the Allies, and now Germany is on the defensive. Her strength is waning; our strength continues to grow without failing.

The hour of retribution is at hand, and "as in the time when her war strength was superior to the strength of her neighbours, Germany suddenly declared war upon them, so now, feeling her weakness, she suddenly offers to enter into peace negotiations. Particularly she desires to begin these negotiations and to complete them before her military talent is exhausted. At the same time she is creating a false impression about the strength of her Army by making use of her temporary success over the Roumanians, who had not succeeded in gaining experience in the conduct of modern warfare".

But, if originally Germany was in a position to declare war at the most favourable moment, the

Alliance, in which "is to be found all-mighty England and noble Italy", has also "the possibility of entering into peace negotiations at such a time as it considers favourable for itself". That time has not arrived. "The enemy has not yet been driven out of the provinces occupied by her. The attainment by Russia of the tasks created by the war—the regaining of Constantinople and the Dardanelles, as well as the creation of a free Poland from all three of her now incomplete tribal districts—has not yet been guaranteed. To conclude peace at this moment would mean the failure to utilise the fruits of the untold trials of you, heroic Russian troops and Fleet. These trials, and still more the sacred memory of those noble sons of Russia who have fallen on the field of battle, do not permit the thought of peace until the final victory over our enemies."

Then follows the straight and stern question: "Who dares to think that he who brought about the beginning of the war shall have it in his power to conclude the war at any time he likes?" The Tsar does not doubt the conviction of every faithful son of Holy Russia that peace can only be given to the enemy when he has "been driven from our borders; and then only when, finally broken, he shall give to us and our faithful Allies trustworthy proof of the impossibility of a repetition of the treacherous attack and a firm assurance that he will keep to these promises. By the strength of these guarantees he will be bound to the fulfilment in times of peace of those things which he undertakes. Let us be firm", the Tsar concludes, "in the certainty of our victory and the All Highest will bless our standards and will cover them afresh with glory, and will give to us a peace worthy of your heroic deeds, my glorious troops—a peace for which the future generation will bless your memory, which will be sacred to them."

The King's Speech on the prorogation of Parliament on Friday in last week emphasised what most of the world by this time ought to know. "The vigorous

prosecution of the war must be our single endeavour until we have vindicated the rights so ruthlessly violated by our enemies and established the security of Europe on a sound foundation." Here is a clear statement of the national purpose. President Wilson's Peace Note, published on the same day, is less clear in its purport and purpose—indeed, is so lacking in clearness as to be regarded by admirers as intentionally obscure. Intentional obscurity is hardly the best means of clearing up anything. It is still more odd when it comes from a writer of high academic standing who should be a master of language and has been pondering over his message for some time. A Sibylline leaf with the best intentions may, to use the comparison of a famous Frenchman, be worse than a crime; it may be a blunder. Dismay and apprehension have been caused by the Note; it has been widely regarded either as clumsy or disingenuous. The spokesman of the greatest of neutrals, when seeking to intervene in a world-wide conflict, should at least speak in language intelligible to the world at large. If America seeks or needs enlightenment as to the issues at stake, the Note does not seem particularly useful as a step in that direction.

What also seems strange is that the President publishes his Note at a time when, as he admits, he is "somewhat embarrassed" to offer it, obviously because it appears to be backing up the German Chancellor's pronouncement. In one sentence he explains that the Note "may best be considered in connection with other proposals which have the same end in view". In the next he begs that it may "be considered entirely on its own merits and as if it had been made in other circumstances". This is puzzling to the plain man, who will learn later "the fact that the objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war are virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own people and to the world". This seems hardly fair to the ingenious varieties of German aims as detailed to different parties. And, further, the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small States (see Belgium *passim*) are to be secure against aggression or denial: that, we learn, is the desire of each side. After this the plain man is glad to come on the plain statement that "the war must first be concluded". Further on still there is a return to the idea that the objects of the belligerents, "stated in general terms, seem the same on both sides". This is as striking a conclusion on the large body of evidence now available as any in the Note. President Wilson till recently has endorsed the announcement that no offers or suggestions of mediation had been made, or would be made, by the United States. His reversal of this policy came as a surprise, we are told, to the official authorities of Washington. To some on both sides of the Atlantic it is not exactly a surprise; but that does not make it an agreeable effort.

Who can wonder at the Swiss desire for peace? Half-German and half-French, completely surrounded by belligerents, and—to say the least—considerably incommode in the matter of food to live on and merchandise to dispose of, it would be marvellous indeed if Switzerland were not weary of the war. There is some irony in the fact that Switzerland was early in the field to set a model example of citizen soldiery; and here she is, now the rest of the world have applied, in one form or another, her system, lamenting a war of which she is so innocent a victim. Her case is one of the tragedies of the world war, but we fear we can describe it as only one of the minor or minimal tragedies.

The Allies' reply to the peace suggestions of Germany has been drawn up, and will be in Mr. Wilson's hands within a few days: it embodies the views and set resolve of ten Powers, led by Russia, France, Italy, and the British Empire. Its tenor is well known through announcements already made by the most responsible

spokesmen of the Great Powers in question. Complete restitution is insisted on as an indispensable preliminary to any negotiations—that is, the evacuation by the German, Austrian, Bulgarian and Turkish troops of all the Allied countries occupied by the enemy. We gather it to be in the highest degree improbable that the Allies will at this stage enter into any detailed explanation of the exact meaning they attach to "reparation" and to "guarantees": it is felt that, were they to do so, they would be out-manceuvred and trapped. But restitution is a very different matter: they cannot be badly trapped by explaining what they intend by that—though Germany, of course, may counter even here, and not without effect among the more susceptible Neutrals, by enquiring: Will South Africa and Australasia also assent to complete restitution?

The German Press, inspired by the authorities, is announcing the complete close of the whole Somme and Ancre offensive, and the overwhelming defeat of the Allies. It claims that a great trench and dug-out system has again been established, with a dozen lines of defence of the strongest possible nature. In fact, Thiépval, which took two years to perfect, has, according to our truthful German, been out-Thiépvalled, and the enemy line in the West is now, by means of two months' labour in the mud, mightier and more invincible than ever. Such is the German claim, and it is being circulated among the neutral countries and throughout the world, as well as used for home consumption to console the German people for empty stomachs and empty purses just when the cruel pinch of winter is being felt from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

But the claim is not at all based on truth. The Allied offensive in France is not over. Quite on the contrary; both Great Britain and France are piling up vast and vaster masses of material, which they propose, when the days lengthen and the earth becomes terra firma once more, to place accurately on the head of the imaginatively secure and victorious German: at certain places which we shall know all about by-and-by, when the time comes for renewed action. Meanwhile the Allies have been engaged through the Christmas week, and generally of late, in visiting the German trenches at a number of spots and removing German soldiers to real security. These raids, near Arras and elsewhere, do not yield German prisoners by the thousand and ten thousand, as did Verdun and Beaumont Hamel, etc., but they are very useful feats, and from information we received from the Front we gather that the appearance of British infantry in the German trenches is highly distasteful to the occupants thereof.

Hence tame surrenders grow more and more numerous, and hands are always ready to go up at the sight of steel. "The Boche, ma'am, cannot stand cold steel", explained a wounded soldier to an elderly lady at a tea. "Dear me", replied the lady artlessly, "and it must be so very cold now!" "Punch" was responsible for this story, and it was truer possibly than the inventor of it knew. The German soldiers in the trenches like cold steel less and less, and the steel has been particularly cold of late. In one little raid affair on the Western front lately fifty-seven Germans put up their hands and flocked off to the British lines. The truth is, the Germans are in a demoralised state on the Western front, especially in the areas of the Somme and the Ancre. They cannot work with any degree of safety on their immature dug-outs and trenches, for the British artillery is very active and—thanks to observation—painfully accurate. The German therefore lives in constant expectation of being either blown up or buried alive. It is not likely that he will be able to stand another winter and spring of this kind of punishment, and it is therefore very natural and human that he should be desperately anxious to secure either an outright peace or a temporary cessation.

People who have much doubt about the position in the West, and the prospects of the Germans there, should read Colonel Repington's article in Tuesday's "Times". It is one of the soundest that we have read for a long time, and it accurately reflects the feeling in France itself so far as the best military judgment is concerned. Colonel Repington emphasises with force and clearness what has been pointed out again and again during the last three months in the SATURDAY REVIEW. The success of the Somme offensive has been most signal: the Germans there have suffered immense losses, both in men and in moral, and, above all, this Western front is the spot (a) where we are best able to strike, and (b) where a decision will have to be taken. It should be taken there next year if the nation is steady and works hard at making guns and shells; then the German armies will retreat, there and everywhere.

General Joffre has been made a Marshal of France, the first under the French Republic. It is a welcome tribute to a great soldier, whose steadfast and splendid services were a great stand-by when the war began. In Father Joffre everybody has a well-merited confidence. This week, also, our front has been lengthened on the Somme, a most significant fact. The Somme is the scene of steadfast and splendid success.

The British offensive in Egypt is making good advance. El Arish, on the coast route in the Sinai Peninsula, has been recaptured after two years of Turkish occupation, and two days before Christmas at Magdhaba, twenty miles south-east of El Arish, a strong position was carried by the dash of our mounted troops and an overwhelming defeat inflicted on the enemy. Throughout our airmen have played a great part in the operations. This is something of a set-off for the battle of Rinnic, in North-Eastern Wallachia, which is claimed by the Germans as a complete victory for Falkenhayn.

Up to the present the situation in Greece remains unsatisfactory. Royalist papers, which alone appear, state that great numbers of officials with Venizelist sympathies are being dismissed from the public service, and outrages continue. Between 1 and 20 December 268 Venizelists are admitted to have been arrested, 91 being released for lack of evidence, and 118 detained for examination. Venizelist journalists are kept in prison, and the "Nea Himerá", a Royalist organ, openly boasts of the first and second days of December as two of the greatest and most glorious days in Greek history. We are glad to see Mr. Balfour's statement that the further demands of the Allies will, in any case, include the release of political prisoners and compensation for those who have unjustly suffered.

People should not be scared by the submarine campaign, and imagine themselves starved out by it in the near future. It is serious and may become accentuated. But in due course the Navy, there is not the least reason to doubt, will deal with it faithfully. By convoy, by completer armament—and by other means—we shall get the new submarine campaign well under presently. Good things are already being done in this matter. We have a notion that the submarine will become again as perilous to its crew as the Zeppelin is to its crew. Wait and hear is a good maxim in this matter.

The movement for greatly increasing the production in 1917 of home-grown food has started in earnest in many parts of the country—a result of the change of Government. There are two views about Mr. Prothero's expression that the country must regard itself as "a beleaguered city". One view is that it was rather too alarmist; the other that it was the only way to arouse public opinion to the gravity of the food question. No doubt it will be "quoted in Germany" and will bring a sort of consolation to people there who are suffering acutely. But the time seems to have

passed for troubling greatly about things quoted in Germany. If we turn back a year we find this reproach of "quoted in Germany" to be about the most heinous that could be levelled at a speaker or a newspaper. Mr. Prothero's saying would have been hissed a year ago: to-day it is cheered as patriotic. The policy of "silence and composure" has depreciated like the German mark.

The final Report of the Air Inquiry Committee, issued last week, is late in its appearance. It is also belated in praising the marked success of our airmen since the inquiry was started. The evidence offered is considered at great length. The Committee do not agree with General Henderson's view that he made a great mistake in stopping the procedure of the Royal Aircraft Factory with their 200 horse-power engine design, and see no reason to suppose that the opposite course would have led to the earlier production of high-powered engines. It is held that we were slow in producing a machine to match the Fokker, and that such machines were not at first available in sufficient quantities. The case of Lieut. Littlewood and the aeroplane which landed at Lille is not cleared up, and shows the limitations of the Committee as a means of securing evidence.

Their criticisms and conclusions are best exhibited in their recommendations, under four headings:

I.—The equipment of the Royal Flying Corps should be entirely separated from the executive command, and this change should be made at once. The large and increasing work of both is too much for one man to do. One Equipment Department should supply both the Army and the Navy Flying Services.

II.—The R.A.F. should be maintained, not as a manufacturing establishment, but for the purpose of trial and experiment, research, the preparation of drawings, repairs, and the manufacture of spares. Trade jealousy of the R.A.F. would thus be largely reduced.

III.—Observers should receive promotion without having to become pilots, and a corps of them should be formed, with regular promotion.

IV.—These are the main suggestions, but the Committee also refer to the tightening of discipline in the upkeep of school machines. While the Committee has had to deal with many exaggerations and unfounded statements, we think the movement which led to its formation has been of real use. We hope, indeed, that its labours, like those of many Committees, will not prove to be largely infructuous.

Christmas Day was clearer and brighter than its predecessors, and though the voice of the bells was missing in the evening, it was none the worse for being more of a home festival than usual. In the dark streets, where gleams of light showed up, came the sound of clapping hands, the endless iteration of "Sir Roger de Coverley", and the gay laughter of children. Boxing Day illustrated the new energies of the nation and the familiar vagaries of the weather. In many a suburb land was dug for new crops by eager spades. Those returning from the country in the evening under a clear night of stars found themselves plunged in a heavy London fog, and stranded in many cases by the dislocation of trains and buses.

The War Conference of the Empire is to assemble in London in February, and we rejoice to find that India is to take her place beside the self-governing Dominions—a stately and magnificent design! The impression certainly grows that at length we have a Government full of ideas and swift to act. Great decisions taken instead of niggling compromises haggled over and then postponed—there is no denying that herein is the most striking difference so far discerned between the Government of to-day and its two predecessors.

LEADING ARTICLES.

THE ALLIED POWERS AND PEACE.

THE reply of the Allied Powers to the German Note suggesting peace will by this time next week be in President Wilson's hands; and there is no doubt it will prove a logical and candid document. The language of it is a matter that excites the liveliest curiosity, for it will be the expression not of one but of ten Powers, most of them far apart in race, habit of life, national characteristic—and yet bound together to-day by bonds which only resistance to Prussian domination could have created. Of the tenour of this reply there can be no doubt whatever; we know that tenour perfectly well beforehand through what has within the past ten days been uttered by the most authentic spokesmen of Russia, France, Italy, Great Britain. Stripped of irony and retort, the reply already given announces that there can be no peace until Germany assents to restitution, to reparation, and to guarantees that will prevent the world being deluged in blood again. This is not the British reply, it is the Allied reply. The second and third of these are conditions which would be quite impossible to define exactly unless the war were put aside and all the Powers concerned sat down to argue, explain, and negotiate at length. We are not to suppose for a moment that there is the smallest likelihood of such a thing occurring to-day. Reparation and guarantees are, hence, unlikely to make substantial and detailed progress in the reply of the Allies. Restitution is easily defined. It means that Germany and her partners should hand back Belgium, France, Poland, Serbia, and Roumania to the dispossessed nations. Nothing could be clearer than this item of the Allied terms. But is it in the region of faint possibility that Germany would agree to restitution for a start? We know it is not. Even assume we are wrong and Germany is prepared to evacuate these countries, is there anyone living who believes she would not at once counter with the demand that the Allied Powers, for their part agree to march out of the captured German colonies? And this brings us at once to South Africa and to Australasia, who, as Lord Milner can tell us, would want to have "their say." We know that restitution, the simplest demand, is as certain to be refused at this stage as the sun is to set this evening: and the Allied Powers are absolutely set on restitution as preliminary.

There are several reasons, perfectly well understood in the Chancelleries of Europe, and indeed by all people who have made an intelligent study of the war, why Germany has brought forward the peace suggestions on which the Tsar has just passed judgment in an order to his troops. One reason is her military anxiety caused by agonising losses on the Somme and Ancre and at Verdun, and by the demoralisation of great masses of her troops there. Germany knows that if the Allies continue to turn out munitions of war at the extraordinary rate they have been doing since July 1916, and another offensive on a huger scale than that of last July starts early in the spring, the game will be up. Another reason is the state of things within Germany. The Roumanian whirlwind campaign has yielded considerable military glory, together with a certain amount of foodstuff, but the latter has to be distributed in many hungering quarters. Bulgaria is growing lean as well as Germany and Austria, and there is also Turkey, which has been milked almost dry by Germany, and must also have fodder for subsistence. Indeed, the cry for food is so urgent now within the Central Powers group that a

further adventure by the invading armies in the Dobrudja may be meditated—at least in the direction of Odessa. It looks somewhat like it. The state of things in Germany to-day is very bad, though it is not gaunt famine yet—it is only its spectre that has begun to stalk through the Fatherland.

There is a third reason, however, for these peace proposals which has to be carefully borne in mind here and in the countries of the Entente: there is always a considerable hope in Germany that one of the four Great Powers in the Allied group may be detached. Russia and Italy are, no doubt, specially thought of in this connection; though no opportunity has been lost—this was particularly noticeable during certain phases of the Somme offensive—of stirring up, so far as possible, a little ill-feeling between France and Great Britain. Anyone who regularly observes the comments and news columns of the leading German newspapers soon perceives the great importance Germany attaches to this hope of breaking up the alliance of the four Great Powers of the Entente. There is actually within Germany to-day a party, represented in the Press, which openly favours a separate peace with Russia—if it can be arranged!—though it is true there are other parties who are, or profess to be, utterly opposed to such a policy. There are sections in Germany who hate Russia more than they hate England, and the Tsar's order to his troops will confirm them in their hatred.

German statesmen and soldiers know that if once they could split up the Alliance against them, or if the Alliance splits up through internal differences or difficulties, Germany's position must be enormously improved. They perceive that in such a case they could not be beaten for years at any rate, if at all. Divide et impera exactly expresses the German hope and ambition as regards the Entente.

The preservation of the Alliance, its solidity and unanimity, is a matter of supreme importance. We cannot hope to win within a reasonable period without it; it is a question whether we could even count on a draw without it. This is why hasty comment on the handling of foreign affairs is so perilous. The question of Greece is an instance in point. Many of the haphazard statements as to Greece one has heard and read during the last few months turn the blood cold. Those who have been clamouring for a "strong" policy in regard to Greece, demanding the deposition of King Constantine and the adoption of Venizelism all round, and who have talked and written as if we only need a "strong" Foreign Minister here in order to array the Greek nation against the Central Powers, have overlooked not only the Alliance but the facts of the case as regards Greece itself. Had their extraordinary programme been ventured on we should have played clean into the hands of Germany, and our side would not have added anything worth the name of force to its military assets. That is why we have always deprecated this rough and ready way of discussing foreign politics in regard to the war. To recommend the prompt application of what is termed a "strong policy" in the Balkans is to recommend a course which might strain the Alliance even to the breaking point. Nor would the policy be strong at all, were it carried out, as our imperfectly informed amateur foreign ministers suppose. It would turn out to be impotent. Our aspiring amateurs long clamoured for the pushing of Roumania into the war: observe the result. They were for nagging the United States into the war, which was the worst line they could have taken. But had they succeeded in their

Greek programme we should have had confusion piled on confusion, and in the result probably the worst mess of all. Foreign policies in which several Allies are concerned, and which relate to a country, like Greece, rent in twain by internal differences, cannot be forced like a general election at home or a comparatively simple and urgent question such as obligatory military service, or the taking over of mines and shipping by Government. The Greek business has been unfortunate and humiliating for the Allied cause; but, knowing sundry things about its intricacies, we are thankful the zealots in this country have not had their way.

To strive always for unanimity among the Great Powers which have charge of the Allied cause, and to secure it, this is the first essential for success in the war. Germany's method is not quite the same. She is able to play the suzerain, to compel her will and military efficiency on her subordinates—Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey. We cannot emulate her. But unanimity is at any rate the best substitute in war for dictatorship, and it is this we must cultivate without ceasing. Great results have already flowed from it, as the later phases of the Somme offensive demonstrate; and the German peace manoeuvres are a decided blessing in this—they are not separating the Great Powers of the Allied cause, but, as the news of this and last week shows, binding them together closer. To preserve and solidify the Alliance is not only the way to win the war, it is the way also to ensure peace hereafter. It is a far more practicable instrument for the peace of the world, which President Wilson and his people rightly desiderate, than Hague conferences or "Leagues of Nations" hot to go to war with any country which is not of their queue.

A CENTURY OF THE LONDON SCHOOL.

THE almost entire lack of education amongst the poor and working classes in 1816, after the war which ended with Waterloo,* led to searching of hearts. Improvement in the provision for education then began, which ultimately led to the Education Act of 1870. The movement in 1816 was of a social, philanthropic, or religious character. One is surprised, in reading the evidence of witnesses before the Parliamentary Committees, with the pathetic belief that in the dreadful misery and bestial conditions—the word is not too strong—of the poor of that day they could be affected by education. We take a different view now. We ask: If the material conditions of the poor are bad, what can be the benefit of education? Our view is the result of a century of experience, and we are very much alive to the waste of money and energy on the education of classes whose conditions prevent them from taking the benefit of the opportunities that are lavished on them.

Our point of view has changed in another way. We have gradually come round to demanding education in anticipation of international, industrial, and commercial competition. We are disappointed here too; we do not seem to get commensurate benefits from the millions of money that are spent. We are met again by the very similar difficulty—the incapacity of our elementary school children for making the best, or good, use of the education provided. Few children, comparatively, do in any class; but the conditions under which, even now, after a vast improvement on those of a century ago, the poorer classes receive their education stultify the provisions for them. There is a particular temptation, therefore, at present to exaggerate the alleged uselessness of spending so much money on our school system. The war is alarming us about the spending of money in the coming years. Our new rule of life is to be economy, and the most plausible and seductive rule of economy for many people is cutting down of rates and Parliamentary

grants, the most prominent feature of our education system to those who look at things in that way. We shall need as strong a faith in education as an instrument of health and efficiency, and thereby of economy, as the educationists of 1816 had in its efficacy as an instrument of social improvement and morality.

It is not possible to deny that there is much waste in education; but we must accept the depressing fact with the reflection that it is a common feature of all kinds of effort, and look to the history of our school system for encouragement. The war is increasing the difficulties, and after the war there is too much reason to believe that social and economic conditions may be more nearly like those of 1816 than they have been, say, for the last half century, unless we begin at once to prepare against peace. But it was in the evil conditions of 1816 that the wiser part of the nation became impressed with the value of education. If such conditions are to be more or less repeated after the war, we at least enter the future with a system of schools and an educational organisation which in itself is perfect by comparison. So late as 1874, four years after the Education Act, there were schools in London, converted from stables, which were more overcrowded and filthy than even the houses from which the pupils came. We must not allow a false economy to throw us back to anything like that. Suppose many of us do not appreciate all the effects of education as the wise educationist appreciates them; we are probably convinced that for practical purposes the working classes should be sound and vigorous in health, should not be maimed or defective in physique, so as to be useless industrially and a charge on the national wealth. This, then, can be said for the schools: that they are now the most useful hygienic institutions that we could establish. They are suffering already through the war having restricted their means and reduced the numbers of those who were engaged in normal times in this branch of education. The professional and the amateur helper have gone to the war. The children's care side of education is always hampered, as other sides of education are, by the poverty and ignorance and stupid perversity of parents. They do not understand the physical dangers and the preventive and curative means necessary for their children, or they are as helpless in dealing with them as they are when they put them to the "blind alley" occupations for the sake of temporary higher wages. So far as the nation's health can be protected from the misfortune of poverty, or the perversity and ignorance of parents, the schools are the protectors. The economy is obvious. There is far more economy in extending the system than in letting it fall below the standard it has reached. We may be reconciled by its actual work and potentialities to whatever other disappointments the schools have caused us. The Care of Children Committees are an admirable feature in the working of the health side of elementary education. They are voluntary workers whose function is intended to be the visiting of the homes and the parents, obtaining proper medical treatment for the children, as advised by the medical officers, and working generally with the teachers, parents, and the advisory committees, so that, on the children leaving school, suitable employment may be obtained for them, and, if possible, their attendance secured at evening continuation schools. These committees have an excellent record; but the war has come, and much of their work is now left undone. Mr. W. Harbutt Dawson, in his book, "Municipal Life and Government in Germany", published just before the beginning of the war, writes at length on the similar committees in Germany. The whole system of health education in German schools, and the work of the Care Committees, was much more extensive and organised there before the war than it was here. German voluntary organisation in education, as well as in some other departments of municipal life, is much more common than in this country—a remarkable fact in a nation where most things are supposed to be done by means of State compulsion. We know with what aims the Germans educate their people and protect their physical health as the condition of their efficiency

in war and peace. It would be contrary to all that we expect of them to imagine that their aim and methods will change when the war is over. The Prussians especially, who now control all Germany, have a tradition of compulsory universal education of the utmost possible efficiency, the longest and the most steadfast of all European nations—unless it be Scotland. In the national catastrophe after Jena they turned to education and revived municipal life as their means of recovery. Will they do otherwise if catastrophe awaits them as the result of this war? There can be no going back for us. Waste of time, money, and energy from such things as ill-chosen subjects, will have to be eliminated, it is true; waste due to our social and economic imperfections is in various degrees inevitable; but the ideal of the most prolonged and the most thorough health education, of the best scientific, intellectual, technical, and citizen training for all classes cannot be lowered unless we are reduced to abandoning all our other ideals and ambitions.

THE COMING NEWSPAPER?

SMALLER papers, if the war should prove a long one, are, we hear, sure to be the order of the day—smaller dailies, weeklies, monthlies, every description. Smaller books, too, may well come. The raw material—already up by 100 per cent. in price—with a prolongation of the war, will grow beautifully less, and, naturally, the Government will have to guard against the greedy ones gobbling up all the raw material at the cost of their rivals or neighbours. We cannot affect to regard smaller books, papers, magazines, as an unmixed evil. It is not growing, like a tree, in bulk that makes a book or a paper better be. It is wrong to regard quantity in any kind of printed and literary publication as a benefit. Mass is no part of literary merit. Quite on the contrary, the bulky literary things are often the bad things. Gluttons in quantity are starvelings in quality; and it sometimes happens, too, that in literature they blind the eyes that read them by the cruel smallness of their packed print. A great deal of the bad sight to-day among British people is due to small print. We remember Sir C. A. Pearson warning people against reading in the train; reading any but good bold print in the train is a short cut to blindness.

But, if lessening size and quantity lead instead to growing quality in printed matter, a great public benefit will be secured. Why, for example, should we expect eighty to a hundred thousand words in a novel? Why should newspaper readers desire—if they do desire—leading articles a yard long, and notes that are lesser leading articles? The introduction of short leading articles into the chief sheet of the "Times" should be welcomed generally. It is a humane step, and wise. Moreover, why have rows of headlines—anything up to a dozen—when immediately below these is the news column, containing the substance on which these headlines are based? When paper grows scarcer and scarcer, we presume the headlines will have to go, or the article on which the headlines are based will have to go.

Quality is what every form of literary matter should aim at, not quantity. Fair print and good writing are needed; not tons of—for the eyesight—unfair print and so-so writing. As to books, we do not mind how exiguous they are if only they be good: if not good, they are produced to no public service. "The Vicar of Wakefield" is small; but it is worth reading through a hundred times. That is the great point about a small, good book—its shortness need not trouble us, for we can soon take it up anew and read it a second or third time; so that, really, we get much more for our money out of a good short book than out of a bad long one, which is tedious to get through once, and which no sensible person would think of tackling twice unless he were wrecked with it on a desert island, and, like Alexander Selkirk, had to finish his journey alone. Shortness and quality in place of

quantity—this should be the aim of the producer in literature henceforth, and the content of the purchaser. Shorter stories, shorter publications generally, plus literary quality or true efficiency—here is the true goal.

THE GREAT WAR.

APPRECIATION (NO. 126) BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL STONE.

MAN-POWER AND UNIVERSAL NATIONAL SERVICE.

LET us thank the Prime Minister for using the correct term "National Service" instead of the hateful and incorrect term "Conscription", which originated with the Napoleonic wars of conquest, and neither technically nor morally could ever be applicable to a nation in arms for the lawful purpose of self-preservation. National Military Service in this country was called "Conscription" by the Pacifists with the sinister motive of discrediting it in the public estimation, and, owing to the ignorance of some and the political leanings of others, the horrible word achieved quite a vogue. Universal National Service is the organisation of the man-power of the country in such a fashion that "every man who is not taken for the Army, whatever be his position or rank, is really employed on work of national importance". For the present an attempt is to be made to secure the required result by voluntary enrolment, somewhat on the lines of the munition workers' scheme. "I have no doubt", said the Prime Minister, "that when it is realised how essential to the life of the nation it is that the service of every man should be put to the best use, we shall secure an adequate supply of volunteers. We are taking immediate steps to secure by this means the men we want. We shall begin as soon as may be to classify industries and invite the enrolment of volunteers. If it is found impossible to secure the number we require—and I hope it will be possible—we shall not hesitate to come to Parliament and ask Parliament to release us from pledges given in other circumstances, and to obtain the necessary power for rendering our plans fully effective. The nation is fighting for its life, and it is entitled to the best services of all its sons".

To carry this scheme into effect Mr. Neville Chamberlain has been appointed Director-General. His appointment inspires confidence, for here we have a man selected for a new and difficult official position not because he belongs to this party or to that, not because he is an individual for whom "a place has to be found", but because he is a man of proved administrative ability in the active exercise of his best mental powers.

The civil and military sides of the Directory of Universal National Service will be entirely separate, under a civil director and a military respectively responsible to the Director of National Service. The military director will be responsible for recruiting to the War Office, and no change is contemplated in his status or duties, except that by placing him under the Director of National Service he will be in a position to co-operate intelligently with the civil director and avoid overlapping or economic misapplication of man-power.

This should prove to be a great and most beneficial reform, and its importance will immediately be appreciated on the one hand by all the great industries of national importance, such as munitions, aircraft, ship-building, etc., and on the other hand by the Adjutant-General's branch at the War Office and by every military commanding officer, to say nothing of the men themselves, who, especially in the days of voluntary enlistment, got completely "fed up" with the perpetual shuffling and re-shuffling through attempts to get the square pegs into square holes, and thus rectify, as far as possible, the initial errors of recruiting and posting.

It is difficult for the lay reader to realise completely the immense waste of man-power caused by haphazard voluntary enlistment; but one or two examples will help him to understand the situation. Thus, a dentist enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery as a driver: he

knew nothing about horses when he joined, though by the time his battery went to France he was one of the best drivers in the brigade; but his specialist skill as a dentist was wasted, and the Army wanted dentists. Again, a first-rate chauffeur mechanic enlisted in the infantry. He would have preferred to enlist in the Army Service Corps as a mechanical transport driver, but there were no vacancies, and he was anxious to begin soldiering, hoping that he might be transferred later on; but, owing to the difficulty of keeping the ranks of the infantry full, no transfers were permitted.

Again, take the question as a general one. Thousands of men who belonged before enlistment to highly specialised trades and professions found themselves serving as infantry privates, gunners, drivers, and what not; after a few months of training one of the periodical calls comes round for men of certain trades to be noted for inspection by experts with a view to their being employed in munitions. In some units quite a large number are found. They return to civil life. Their military training has been practically wasted, their places are filled by untrained men, and the fighting efficiency of their late unit is impaired in the precise proportion of the number of trained men it has lost.

The Prime Minister is sanguine about the results which will be obtained by voluntary enrolment; but registration is to be proceeded with at once, so that the needful machinery will be in existence if it should be found necessary to abandon the voluntary principle in favour of compulsion.

A sort of modified compulsion has, in fact, been already brought to bear in the case of agricultural labourers by the arrangement entered into by the Army Council with the Board of Agriculture to meet the requirements of certain farming districts which "have too few men left to secure that increase in food production which is desirable in the national interests. To meet this difficulty it may be found necessary to grant conditional exemption from military service to a certain proportion of the agricultural labourers who are surplus to the net requirements in the counties in which they now are, provided they undertake voluntarily to transfer to counties in which agricultural labour is deficient".

There seems to be something illogical in this arrangement, although it bears evidence of a thoroughly satisfactory understanding between the War Office and the Board of Agriculture. What is going to happen if "the agricultural labourers who are surplus to the net requirements of the counties in which they now are" decline to avail themselves of this offer, and decide to don khaki in preference to transferring voluntarily their skilled agricultural labour "to counties in which agricultural labour is deficient"? Will they be attested as soldiers and then, after a few months' military training has made them valuable as soldiers, will a call come from the Director of National Service for any men who are skilled agricultural labourers to be returned to the land? It is an ungracious task to criticise such a well-intended new departure, which, after all, may bear the fruit which is hoped for; but it seems opportune to utter a word of warning to prevent the old abuses being perpetuated under new names.

The Central Empires will have had a start of twenty-eight months in the application of the principles of National Service, during which time the net has been drawn steadily tighter round the civil population which has not been taken for active service in the Army, and not only so, but, latterly, the population of occupied enemy territory has been drawn upon for forced labour in areas outside its provincial domicile. Moreover, Germany has undoubtedly organised her prisoner labour on strictly utilitarian lines, and far more effectively than we have done hitherto.

We have therefore been fighting a country which, by reason of its highly developed organisation and unscrupulous exactions from the population of occupied territory, has been able to attain a percentage of efficiency in the utilisation of its man-power which we

may put at 100—in other words, it has reached the highest attainable efficiency. During the same period we have moved slowly, by steps taken at long intervals, in the same direction. The first step was the substitution of national military service for the voluntary service which had for some months failed to produce satisfactory results. This step caused one-half of the nation to begin to realise that the other half was fighting its battles. The next step has now been taken and will, in due course, weld the nation into a condition of cohesion which will enable its co-efficient of efficiency to be doubled. Whereas in the past one million of Germans has been the equal of two millions of Britons in respect to output of efficient national work helping to win the war, now onwards we shall steadily reduce that difference until it has ceased to exist; and as our percentage of efficiency increases so will the number of years or months until the end of the war diminish, until that end is reached.

MIDDLE ARTICLES.

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD.*

BY AN OFFICER IN KITCHENER'S ARMY.

HE was just back from leave, and strolled into the mess wearing that extraordinary aspect common to his type of unwashiness and general fatigue, as if he had come straight from the trenches, and not from Blighty. But when a man has left behind him all the obvious good things of life and most of the people he loves, and has been subjected to the tender mercies of the French railway system and the ingenious but irritating methods of R.T.O.'s for a period of days, he may be forgiven if his outlook on life is not exactly *couleur de rose* and if his face looks innocent of soap and razor. This particular person was no exception to the rule. He was frankly dirty, hungry, and thirsty, and his eyes had a look of longing and regret only faintly relieved by the pleasure of seeing familiar faces again and of settling again into that collar which most of us have worn for long, and against which, somehow, we still continue to pull with a good heart.

He sat down, after the usual greetings: the invariable question, "How's Blighty?" The invariable answer, "Oh, tophole; don't talk about it". There followed a morose silence, full of sentimental regrets and hopes, till the newcomer, having eaten and drunk, was moved to speech. "Extraordinary chap I met on the way up", he said, "had a cushy job of the best kind; R.T.O. or Base Ordonnance, or something of that sort. Honest sort of chap he looked, too; told me he'd give anything to be up in the line with us, and was dead sick of mouldering away at his little one-horse place. I told him he could have my job for the asking. He was an odd chap." There was a chorus of assent, and murmurs of "Silly idiot", "Just let him come along", "He little knows", and so forth, all expressing contempt for the gentleman's views of life in general and the war in particular, and intimating that if anyone was to be envied in this war it was just these people with safe jobs on the lines of communication. A few days later the battalion was in action and stormed a position which would have been impregnable had it not been for the gallantry of the men and the complete recklessness of life or death shown by their officers.

And there, correct in spirit, if not in actual detail (the infantry seldom get leave now), you have an exact picture of the mental attitude of most officers towards the war. Almost everyone is dissatisfied with his present job in so far as it means battle, murder, and sudden death. Look at any battalion, or what remains of it, after going through a fortnight's hard fighting, when they are marching back for a rest and reinforcements. In the eyes of everyone, happy and grateful as they are for the respite from the front line or the

* The previous articles in this series appeared in the SATURDAY REVIEW of 22 July, 9 September, 4 and 25 November, 9 and 16 December.

supports, there is a longing to be quit of it all, to get right away from it and never hear or see war any more. But take the same officer and give him an idle three weeks with his battalion by the sea, or place him in that identical cushy job which he once so longed for, and in two months at the outside he will be a thoroughly discontented man, and will be pulling strings and corrupting, or trying to corrupt, the morals of a medical board in the effort to return once more to active service. Which being done, he will again go through the full circle of Edwin Lear's "joy and despair, sympathy, satisfaction, and disgust".

Here is a problem for our psychologists. The novelist who once spent six hundred pages in analysing the hero's sensations and emotions on discovering that, while he was a man, there existed, on the other hand, a large class of beings called "women", might profitably turn his, or her, penetration upon this question: Why this universal dissatisfaction with a man's work? Why this perpetual craving for change; this curious cycle of intense fear, heroic bravery, and complete boredom? Why can no man be content with any post for more than two months at a time?

The phenomenon is new. In old days the adventurer remained adventurous all his life. Only with old age, and not always even then, did he settle down to a quiet and settled life. More usually he died in harness. The unadventurous went into a peaceful profession, and stayed there: probably the one adventure he undertook in his life was falling in love and getting married, and even that, so dull is our civilisation, is regarded as the best way for curbing whatever wildness may still survive in a young man. But here is a new adventure, of vast scale and infinite detail, into which all men, adventurous or not, are drawn willy-nilly, in which a man's past is no criterion of his future behaviour. Some new influence is abroad which fires men to attempt deeds hitherto thought impossible, to see sights of incredible loathsomeness, and to see them unmoved, and then—suddenly—the fire is gone, the man's spirit, for the time at least, is broken, and his one desire is for a quiet life of peace. After which the wheel swings round once more, and the old craving returns, or, rather, the man hates his work, which, though safe, is inactive.

At the back of all this lies uncertainty, not about the justice of our cause or the need of fighting to a finish, but a certain narrowness of view, and a lack of understanding of the ultimate aim before us. Times and standards have changed so much that the old motives for war no longer hold—the desire for wealth, the acquisition of territory, or the glory of conquering a people. At least not on our side; and even the enemy, whatever ideas his rulers may have instilled into him in the past, is beginning to doubt whether he really wanted the war, or at least this war, as much as he thought he did. What indemnity could compensate for an expenditure of four millions a day for three years? No Englishman would wish to rule, or attempt to rule, a people of such mentality as the Germans; and it would be a very ardent Jingo who would not willingly exchange all the territory in the world for all the men that were ours, and then so little valued, in July of 1914. The longer the fight goes on, the more successful our drive, the more obstinate and prolonged the German resistance becomes, so much the more does it become impossible to see any immediate object in fighting except the absolute necessity of ending this German resistance once and for all, as one exterminates some plague. What we are fighting for is that we may be allowed to have ideals at all, and that life may cease to be a mere precarious and purposeless existence, and may again be reasonable and sane.

At the beginning there was a lot of talk about why we went to war, what we were going to do when it was over, and what were the minimum conditions on which we would make peace. That passed, fortunately, and the nation, after about eighteen months, at last realised that war was a serious business that could

not be won by talking. Now, almost everyone is gripped by war in some way or another, and almost everywhere is this restlessness, this craving to be doing something else than what a man is doing at the present.

And the reason begins to appear. Every man feels the new leaven stirring within him. This blessing certainly the war has brought. Ideas and ideals which once seemed revolutionary and Utopian are now accepted as the merest common sense. There has been a great clearing of mists and sweeping away of cobwebs. It is the knowledge of this that is causing a divine unrest; there is in all men's hearts a growing consciousness of their own powers and a new sense of their value. Work which in peace days seemed trivial or irksome now carries a new importance. Almost every cog-wheel in the machinery of the world begins to take its place as part of a whole, instead of seeming stupid and irrelevant. The miner who hated mining and the banker who saw nothing in banking but a monotonous and lucrative condition of existence now see a new significance in their professions; and those who are at the war look back with longing to the trade which once they spurned as commonplace and unprofitable.

And with the longing there comes hope. Mother Nature is very merciful, and she passes her kindly hand over our eyes and ears and hearts, so that we forget the horror and the shame, and remember only the bright heroism, the cheerful steadfastness, the stolid, dogged endurance. None of us, incurable civilians as most of us are, will return to our old niches unchanged. Even when the war is but a grim memory, its shadow—and its light—will still fall upon the way. There will be a new reason for the old things, and less talk about "not worth while". And if the remains of the old world are thus transfigured, surely all this stirring of new thought and aspiration will bring forth something worthy of the effort which has gone to its production. Imperialism, the relations of labour and capital, social reform, public education and morality—there is great hope that all these may cease to be the object of party catchwords, the fulcrum of party levers, and may become real watchwords for men of sincere motive and good intent.

That is what underlies the restlessness and mental strife out here. It is for those at home to ensure that after the war this new army of men who have found a new reason for fighting and have begun to see what is worth fighting for, are given their chance. Only then will this war have been worth winning.

R. H.

A NOTE ON STYLE.

IT would be pleasant to let the imagination escape from the one question that matters and have it play a little about the one that never mattered—style in writing. I mean never mattered to unbelievers on earth. Supremely, style is everything in writing; and the faithful who strive for it here are worshippers offering up a prayer. Style in Paradise, they say, is universal, even the heavenly Yellow Press being steeped in it. No definition of what style exactly is can be agreed on, for there is a perpetual and direct clash of opinion as to this thing. Even agree on its definition, the right application of it remains in dispute. There are those who would sever style from substance. They take style for a pretty-pretty fit for fiction, and to be scorned by fact. Style is to run and hide from war figures or a debate on education or German science. Yet really the more cumbrous and forbidding the subject-matter, the more the need and the province of style. Inert masses can only be made to live by the touch of style. But as to its nature—some have taken correct grammar to be style: they would set Dr. Peter Pangloss on Olympus with Sidney and his peers. They hold that to write "vehemently to differ" is the mark of style, but to write "to vehemently differ" is the mark of a lost soul in English, or a soul never

found. Five-and-twenty years ago they eagerly discussed whether "under the conditions" and "in the circumstances", or "under the circumstances" and "in the conditions" were style, till it was pointed out that nice English shies away from either when it can. There is "reliable", too, against which—according to a strange floating rumour—Sir William Harcourt once raged in a weekly review—though none remembers where. It is said no man has a nodding acquaintance with style who writes "reliable"; yet how could a man speak of a trustworthy soap? There is also that old agony of our childhood about "It is me", "It is I". Nearly all the hard arguments are for "I", yet there often flashes across the mind one of the loveliest things done in English: "Sometimes I went forth to the nooks in the deep meadows by the hazel mounds, and sometimes I parted the ash tree wands. In my waistcoat pocket I had a little red book made square: I never read it out of doors, but I always carried it in my pocket till it was frayed and the binding broken; the smallest of red books, but very much therein—the poems and sonnets of Mr. William Shakespeare. Some books are alive. The book I still have, it cannot die; the ash copses are cut, and the hazel mounds destroyed.

"Was every one, then, so pleasant to me in those days? Were the people so beneficent and kindly that I must needs look back; all welcoming with open hand and open door? No, the reverse; there was not a single one friendly to me. Still, that has nothing to do with it; I never thought about them, and I am quite certain they never thought about me. They are all gone and there is an end. Incompatibility would describe our connection best. Nothing to do with them at all; it was me. I planted myself everywhere—in all the fields and under all the trees . . . and that is why I have never put myself into the charge of the many-wheeled creatures that move on the rails and gone back thither, lest I might find the trees look small, and the elms mere switches, and the fields shrunken, and the brooks dry, and no voice anywhere. Nothing but my own ghost to meet me by every hedge. I fear lest I should find myself more dead than all the rest." Change that "It was me" into "It was I", and an outrage is inflicted on a master.

But then syntax is not style. One would as soon term the ink style or the book of reference.

These peddling points are not worth between them a farthing nib—let them be. After all, there was great virtue in that saying, grown a stereotype, that style is the man. It absolutely is. It is the man, and the most original, individual part of him. Without originality, without heaps of individuality, without independence—for that, perhaps, is the grand essential—style can never be reached by a writer, though a certain smooth form and though a stylishness are constantly reached—and these sometimes pass for the real thing. Thus style in a way is destiny—for a man is born individual or, possibly, is environed unconsciously into it: he cannot achieve it by taking pains, any more than he can change his voice from bass to tenor. He may achieve expression by taking pains, but that is only putting on the cloak of style. Another point to be noted about style is its vitality. That is why it never results in rows of dead words. It may—it often does—use dead words, regular corpses: thus, "resident" or "residential", "late-lamented", "talented authoress". It may scatter a largesse of them, yet at its touch they live. There seems to be a speck of radium in any word or phrase, in a commonplace or stereotype, but it burns unseen till the magic of style illumines it.

Independence and vitality are of its secret armoury. Style cannot be reached by observation, by imitation. In some supreme examples of style the vitality is amazing. In Hazlitt's story of his first walk with Coleridge the whole gives out an impression of warm physical life. We are in contact with living beings, and lean, with the pines, to catch the enchanted words that fall from Coleridge's lips.

Style in certain haunting lines of Shakespeare can produce a sort of tears in the reader: no one is able to

his honest satisfaction to explain why, for it may occur where the passage is not obviously poignant at all: in the sonnets, in "Pericles", in "A Winter's Tale" there are these tears in Shakespeare.

One would like to probe the question of delicacy in style, were there time and patience. A strange view is that delicacy means want of strength. Now if the critic were to say that indelicacy in style meant want of strength, the suggestion would be worth following up. Delicacy in writing—so rarely achieved!—signifies, of course, strength in writing. Delicacy is the terrible, finding point to the sword of style. Not to be delicate is to be an ox in writing. (There are some attempters who would swing a betel, instead, to inflict punishment in print; but they strike themselves between their own knees.) No muff, no weakling was ever delicate in style. But this is a department in style which, at some leisure, one could examine and discuss, irrespective of the larger, far more tantalising question.

G. A. B. D.

EAST AND WEST.

By LORD DUNSANY.

IT was dead of night and mid-winter. A frightful wind was bringing sleet from the East. The long sere grasses were wailing. Two specks of light appeared on the desolate plain: a man in a hansom cab was driving alone in North China.

Alone with the driver and the dejected horse. The driver wore a good waterproof cape, and, of course, an oiled silk hat, but the man in the cab wore nothing but evening dress. He did not have the glass door down because the horse fell so frequently, the sleet had put his cigar out and it was too cold to sleep; the two lamps flared in the wind. By the uncertain light of a candle lamp that flickered inside the cab a Manchu shepherd that saw the vehicle pass, where he watched his sheep on the plain in fear of the wolves, for the first time saw evening dress. And though he saw it dimly, and what he saw was wet, it was like a backward glance of a thousand years; for, as his civilisation is so much older than ours, they have presumably passed through all that kind of thing.

He watched it stoically, not wondering at a new thing, if indeed it be new to China, meditated on it awhile in a manner strange to us, and when he had added to his philosophy what little could be derived from the sight of this hansom cab, returned to his contemplation of that night's chances of wolves, and to such occasional thoughts as he drew at times for his comfort out of the legends of China that have been preserved for such uses. And on such a night their comfort was greatly needed. He thought of the legend of a dragon-lady, more fair than the flowers are, without an equal amongst daughters of men, humanly lovely to look on although her sire was a dragon, yet one who traced his descent from gods of the elder days, and so it was that she went in all her ways divine, like the earliest ones of her race, who were holier than the emperor.

She had come down one day out of her little land, a grassy valley hidden amongst the mountains; by the way of the mountain passes she came down, and the rocks of the rugged pass rang like little bells about her, as her bare feet went by—like silver bells to please her: and the sound was like the sound of the dromedaries of a prince when they come home at evening—their silver bells are ringing and the village folk are glad. She had come down to pick the enchanted poppy that grew—and grows to this day if only men might find it—in a field at the feet of the mountains; if one should pick it happiness would come to all yellow men, victory without fighting, good wages and ceaseless ease. She came down all fair from the mountains; and as the legend pleasantly passed through his mind in the bitterest hour of the night, which comes before dawn, two lights appeared and another hansom went by.

The man in the second cab was dressed the same as the first, he was wetter than the first, for the sleet

had fallen all night, but evening dress is evening dress all the world over. The driver wore the same oiled hat, the same waterproof cape as the other. And when the cab had passed the darkness swirled back where the two small lamps had been, and the slush poured into the wheel-tracks and nothing remained but the speculations of the shepherd to tell that a hansom cab had been in that part of China: presently even these ceased, and he was back with the early legends again in contemplation of serener things.

And the storm and the cold and the darkness made one last effort, and shook the bones of that shepherd, and rattled the teeth in the head that mused on the flowery fables, and suddenly it was morning. You saw the outlines of the sheep all of a sudden, the shepherd counted them, no wolf had come, you could see them all quite clearly. And in the pale light of the earliest morning the third hansom appeared, with its lamps still burning, looking ridiculous in the daylight. They came out of the East with the sleet and were all going due westwards, and the occupant of the third cab also wore evening dress.

Calmly that Manchu shepherd, without curiosity, still less with wonder, but as one who would see whatever life has to show him, stood for four hours to see if another would come. The sleet and the east wind continued. And at the end of four hours another came. The driver was urging it on as fast as he could, as though he were trying to make the most of the daylight, his cabby's cape was flapping wildly about him; inside the cab a man in evening dress was being jolted up and down by the unevenness of the plain.

This was, of course, that famous race from Pittsburg to Piccadilly, going round by the long way, that started one night after dinner from Mr. Flagdrop's house and was won by Mr. Kagg, driving the Honourable Alfred Fortescue, whose father, it will be remembered, was Hagar Dermstein and became (by Letters Patent) Sir Edgar Fortescue, and finally Lord St. George.

The Manchu shepherd stood there till evening, and when he saw that no more cabs would come turned homeward in search of food.

And the rice prepared for him was hot and good, all the more after the bitter coldness of that sleet. And when he had consumed it he perused his experience, turning over again in his mind each detail of the cabs he had seen; and from that his thoughts slipped calmly to the glorious history of China, going back to the indecorous times before calmness came, and beyond those times to the happy days of the earth when the gods and dragons were here and China was young; and lighting his opium pipe, and casting his thoughts easily forward, he looked to the time when the dragons shall come again.

And for a long while then his mind reposed itself in such a dignified calm that no thought stirred there at all, from which when he was aroused he cast off his lethargy as a man emerges from the baths, refreshed, cleansed, and contented, and put away from his musings the things he had seen on the plain as being evil and of the nature of dreams, or futile illusions, the results of activity which troubleth calm. And then he turned his mind towards the shape of God, the One, the Ineffable, who sits by the lotus lily, whose shape is the shape of peace, and denieth activity, and sent out his thanks to Him that he had cast all bad customs westward out of China, as a woman throws household dirt out of her basket far out into neighbouring gardens.

From thankfulness he turned to calm again, and out of calm to sleep.

SEA-SPELL.

O MIGHT my nest
Be far in the west,
Where the sea-line melts
In the sunset's breast,

And dawn-rays quiver
In bands of silver
Over each following breaker's crest—
There would I rest.

O might I go
Where the great tides flow
And the blue gull flies
Where the moon hangs low,
Searching each shallow
And foam-laced hollow,
Lit by the phosphorus' wavering glow—
I would heal my woe.

O might I lie
Where the wild birds cry
Round the green cave's mouth,
And the sea-winds sigh.
May my passing-knell
Be the faint ship's-bell
Of some lone barquentine drifting by—
When I come to die.

E. M. B.

CORRESPONDENCE.

OUR FRIEND AND ALLY ITALY.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—May I be allowed to add a few words to my letter which appeared two weeks ago in your paper, and especially to protest against the construction put by one of your correspondents on a phrase contained in Signor Boselli's last speech? To assert that the words "an active propaganda which derives its origin from intelligible enemy manœuvres" refer to anything appearing in the Italian Press implies the belief that our Premier, while conscious of enemy manœuvres in his own country, and therefore of high treason on the part of the Italians in any way connected with them, yet, for some inscrutable reason, refrains from using his constitutional powers in time of war, and from suppressing the papers or trying the persons concerned. The implication is so absurd that it cannot even be discussed. The words refer therefore to a propaganda which is being carried on outside Italy, and to which a few Englishmen are giving their support, as I think, in perfect good faith.

The problem of the after-war settlement of the eastern shore of the Adriatic is as clear an issue among the Allies as the problems of Alsace-Lorraine and Constantinople. What is required for the realisation of our common hopes is only that final triumph of the Allied Armies of which no Englishman and no Italian has ever doubted. The British Government has given its unconditional support to the Italian thesis, and stands pledged to it, well knowing that Italian statesmen have devised a settlement which, in the words of our Premier, takes into account the "just claims of neighbouring Slavonic nationalities and the necessities of their economic development". They have amply provided for a liberal outlet on the Adriatic, and good harbours both for our friend Serbia and our enemy Croatia.

A propaganda which is intended to upset this clear agreement among the Allies is at the present moment as unjustifiable as any movement aiming at the retention of Alsace by the Germans or of Constantinople by the Turks. Its immediate effect is, and can be no other than, to wound the deepest feelings of the Italian nation, which is even now mourning for the martyrdom inflicted by the enemy on our brothers from Trento, Istria, and Dalmatia, fighting for the common ideal. The Italian nation is of one mind with its Government on this problem, and slanders against one section of Italian public opinion, represented as more extreme in its views and obscurely connected with non-existent German sympathisers, are keenly resented as an insult to our national policy, and an attempt at sowing distrust among the Allies, against our common ideals and our common interests.

Yours, etc.,
RAFFAELLO PICCOLI.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

21 December 1916.

SIR,—After so much purposeless, either boastful or suave, talk on the side of the Jugo-Slavish champions in this country, who have continued here during the war the same work of falsification of history, statistics, and geography perpetrated by Austria against the Italians and in favour of the Croats and Slavens for more than half a century all along the eastern shores of the Adriatic, don't you think it would be worth while to advise our Italian friends and allies not to take those gentlemen too seriously?

Who of us would dream of giving any consideration, for instance, to Mr. Houston Chamberlain just because, among other follies, he dared to include *our* Shakespeare among German writers?

Well, if it is so, why on earth should the Italians be offended just because Mr. Seton Watson has once, among other facetious and playful statements, dared to call the Venetian painter, Vittore Carpaccio (born either in Capodiztra or in Venice), the *Croat* Vittore Carpaccio?

Yours truly,

B. V.

MANIPULATIVE SURGERY.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

53, Iverna Court,
Kensington, W.,

23 December 1916.

SIR,—May I draw your attention to the enclosed cuttings from the current issue of the "Medical Press" in the hope that you may place the facts before the public? Some time ago Mr. H. A. Barker offered to treat disabled soldiers and would-be soldiers gratuitously for the War Office. This offer was rejected by the Army Medical Department notwithstanding the fact that it was pointed out in the House of Commons that officers and doctors and their families had obtained relief at Mr. Barker's hands after eminent surgeons had failed. Is it not time, now that a recognised medical publication has opened its columns to the truth about Mr. Barker's work, and doctors of eminence have openly supported him, after years of an unworthy obscurantism, that the full facts should be made as widely known as possible for the sake of our injured soldiers as well as the furtherance of a just cause?

Faithfully yours,

DESMOND O'CALLAGHAN, Maj.-Gen.

* * The issue of the "Medical Press and Circular" sent to us speaks of a "rising chorus of purely professional testimony" in favour of Mr. Barker's methods. There are several letters of praise from doctors. "One of the most distinguished of London surgeons" is quoted as writing of Mr. Barker's "knowledge and skill in a certain department" as "far above what is possessed by most surgeons", while at the same time suggesting that "Mr. Barker does not appear willing to offer facilities to us for the study of his methods".

The answer of the "Medical Press" to this is that Mr. Barker offered to give a demonstration to the British Medical Association, and that the offer was scornfully rejected, and the writer concludes by declaring that if Mr. Barker's knowledge were to die with him it "would be an undying disgrace to the profession".

"SAYING, PEACE, PEACE."

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—The sentimentalist always thinks himself an idealist. It is natural that the present Master of the Temple should find excuses for President Wilson. It is likely, indeed, that in Mr. Wilson's place Dr. Barnes would have done the same.

Generally our pulpits have been much occupied with President Wilson and the prospects of peace. Would they not have been better occupied with the Peace of God? But that passes understanding. Do our preachers think that because it passes understanding

it is beyond their congregations' regard? Seriously it seems as if a good many of them do. They more and more in their sermons avoid what is not of this world and discourse on contemporary affairs. They seem to have this idea that their congregations will wish them to talk of what is going on around them. That, apparently, is the way to hold their attention. This, I believe, is a complete miscalculation. The man or woman who cannot conceive, or does not believe, there is anything the other side of the grave, or who does not trouble to consider whether there is or is not, or if he believes therein finds it too remote to interest him, is not likely to go to church at all. On the other hand, those who do not find this world all satisfying go to church precisely for the sake of that which is not of this world. They feel that "the world is too much with us", that in the bustle of the ever-multiplying and varied interests of modern life that which is spiritual has more and more difficulty in establishing itself. In church, at any rate, they expect to be freed from the world's pressure. Is it strange that a not serene frame of mind is induced if the preacher proceeds to refer to the mundane events of the week? For the clergyman officiating as priest the churchman has all respect; when he preaches on the things of the spirit, or expounds theologically, he will get due regard as a man specially trained, but when he introduces current events he merely competes with the newspapers, and has no right to expect any more attention than they, but rather less. As an educated man, the parson's views may be interesting, and at dinner or in a club would be welcome as those of any other educated man. But it is a bit too much when young men, sometimes not very well educated, and certainly weak in knowledge of the world, discourse in the pulpit on newspaper topics to those who are likely to know a good deal more about them than they.

Parsons discussing schemes of universal peace are really futile. They seem unable to get behind the word. Suppose we had a league of nations effective by force to prevent two antagonistic Powers from fighting. It would bring us no whit nearer the Christian goal. The two countries, already clutching at each other's throats, would hate each other not the less, but more, for not being able to get at each other. They would be at peace, but would have nothing in common with the peace of God.

There is a school of clergymen who seem to have been mainly occupied for a long while with trying to explain away the "not" in Christ's saying, "My kingdom is not of this world". They have tried to bring Christ to the world instead of bringing the world to Christ, to make the mundane mind Christian by making Christianity mundane. Their insistence on everything except the one thing needful reminds me of a true story of the holder of a college living on whom a parishioner called who was exercised with much wrestling of the spirit. The vicar asked him what he wanted. "I am uneasy about my soul, sir", said the parishioner. "Oh, is that all?" was the answer.

Yours obediently,

HAROLD HODGE.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

Oxford and Cambridge Club, Pall Mall.

SIR,—So the United States are tired of the war and are prepared to make peace. They are, says President Wilson in the Note of 20 December, "a neutral nation whose interests have been most seriously affected by the war", and he fears "lest the situation of neutral nations, now exceedingly hard to endure, be rendered altogether intolerable".

It happens that there is another neutral nation whose interests have been most seriously affected by the war, and whose situation, for long exceedingly hard to endure, has already been rendered altogether intolerable. That nation was of her own will, nay of necessity, as neutral as the United States, but it is not for her that the President is feeling concerned.

It seems, therefore, not out of place, or untimely, now that the United States are beginning to cry out themselves,

to remind them that one of the principal objects for which England is fighting this war is in order that that other nation may "recover in full measure all, and more than all, that she has sacrificed", and that "we shall never sheathe the sword which we have not lightly drawn" until that object has been accomplished (see Mr. Asquith's speech at the Guildhall on 9 November 1914).

However much we may regret to learn that the interests of the United States "have been most seriously affected by the war" (until the President's note we were under the impression that they had prospered exceedingly thereby), we must take leave to put their interests second to those of that other nation.

The President looks forward to "the formation of a league of nations to insure peace and justice throughout the world". He declares that the interest of the United States "in the means to be adopted to relieve the smaller and weaker peoples of the world of the peril of wrong and violence is as quick and ardent as that of any other people or Government. They stand ready and even eager to co-operate in the accomplishment of these ends when the war is over with every influence and resource at their command. But the war must first be concluded". This certainly is prudent on the part of the President. But what is wanted is eagerness to co-operate against wrong and violence first and prudence afterwards, not prudence while the mischief is being done and eagerness to co-operate when all is over.

Before the President looks forward to a league of nations in the future, may we ask him to look back to a league of nations in the past? Such a league, a rehearsal as it were for a league of peace, was already in existence before the war began, to wit the Hague Conventions. The failure of the most powerful among the neutral nations to honour its signature to those conventions was one of the principal causes why they have been consigned "to the limbo of lost reputations". So Viscount Grey in his address to the Foreign Press Association on 23 October told the nations who are now standing out that "they must be prepared not to undertake more than they are prepared to uphold by force", and asked them "Will you play up when the time comes?" "Play up", be it observed, not "Speak up". The United States must not be surprised if the Allies, who are giving their all in order "to relieve the smaller and weaker peoples of the world of the peril of wrong and violence", are not very enthusiastic for the co-operation of those who only write notes.

Yours faithfully,

H. M. HUMPHRY.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

35, Roeland Street,
Cape Town.

SIR,—Reading lately the account of the great meeting in London on the second anniversary of the Declaration of War makes one realise the immense contrast between the two sides in this contest. On the one hand, you have the four foremost nations in the world joined in the closest bonds of friendship, animated by one common determination, allied for one common aim, and that aim the noblest possible—namely, the upholding of the fabric of civilisation, of Christianity, and of the rights of the weaker against the strong—in short, the vindication of moral against brute force. On the other hand, we see a heterogeneous combination of nationalities, whose one common bond is that of a common brutality and barbarism, presided and domineered over by a nation the most hated, and condemned by the great majority of the civilised world, that any nation, perhaps, ever has been. What fitter allies could be imagined for the infamous, treacherous, brutal German nation than decadent Austria, debased Turkey, and crafty Bulgaria? What an unutterable evil for the world it would have been if such a trio of scoundrel nations had won the war. And yet this had nearly come to pass. Thanks to the intervention of God on the side of justice and right at the battle of the Marne, the world was saved; and now all that is needed is for us to exercise patience and without fal-

tering or hesitation go straight on on the road to victory, which must sooner or later be ours, when Germany, the mainspring of the devilish coalition, will be lying crushed and helpless at our feet.

As you remarked lately, the important point is to beware lest, with growing success and victories, there should be any relaxing of our determination, so often expressed, to see this war through to a successful end. The insidious voice of the peace crank is sure to be heard in the land when the winter of our discontent is past and the glorious springtime of hope and success is at hand. The peacemonger may be merely a sentimental, thoughtless fool, or he may be a tout of the enemy, paid for the purpose of insinuating these dangerous ideas into the people's heads, and suggesting that the Huns are now so beaten that we can safely come to terms with them and resume commercial and political relations. The kind of person whom we must guard against is well typified by Mrs. Helena Swanwick, M.A., chairman of the Peace Negotiations Committee. This lady, according to the "Illustrated Sunday Herald", has made the following statements:—"We say that Germany has been punished already. Her militarists told her people that they were about to conquer all Europe. They have not done it. That will be punishment enough." So, according to the logical mind of this sentimental muddled-head, a nation that makes sufficiently foolish claims before a war may, on the strength of them, commit any crimes without fear of punishment, as its foes will consider it has been sufficiently punished by not attaining its monstrous claims or objects! Again, this feeble specimen of femininity says, when asked by the interviewer whether German atrocities were not such as to require the crushing of Germany: "All nations commit atrocities in war, and England commits them, too. We committed them in South Africa, and we have killed women and children in France . . . all war is an atrocity." This is the kind of person to whom we are to listen—people who cannot, or will not, distinguish between the ordinary and inevitable acts of cruelty common to all wars and the diabolical and unheard-of deeds of revolting cruelty common only to Germany and her ally, the Turks; not that I wish to class the Turks in the same demoniacal category as the Huns. Even if Germany had been as innocent as she professes with regard to the origin of the war, yet her conduct in its execution amply justifies all the punishment I hope she is going to get. And to talk as so many of these incompetent thinkers do of treating her as we should any ordinary foe, and coming to such terms as we should with civilised nations, is absurd and dangerous. Before any renewal of old conditions can take place Germany must atone by years of pain and sorrow for the inhuman way she has waged war on the Allies. It needs at least a quarter of a century of stern punishment on the whole generation that has been involved in this crime before they themselves or their descendants can be as they were before. And nothing but a stern determination to inflict this punishment as a mere act of justice will be sufficient to counteract the poisonous peace talk of the thoughtless or the treacherous.

Yours faithfully,

THEODORE B. BLATHWAYT.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

Hotel Metropole, Chicago,
26 November 1916.

SIR,—I beg to call your attention to the enclosed very important and interesting article upon German Peace Propaganda in the United States, which I have cut from the "New York Tribune."

This warning of a German plot to secure a premature cessation of hostilities should be heeded and guarded against in England.

Yours very sincerely,

BERTRAND SHADWELL.

* * * The article points out clearly the strength of the Peace Propaganda in the United States. That movement "has now enlisted the very powerful financial support hitherto

lacking". It "is built on the constant assertion that the war is a draw and that Germany can never be defeated". It finds a ready hearing all over the United States "among those who believe war to be a sin", and "the Germans have succeeded in making Americans in very great numbers believe that it is purely and simply a war of trade and commerce between the British and the Germans, and the various economic conferences have served to emphasise the idea". Further it is pointed out that the President will be led by peace agitation to intervene in the next few months "without reference to the wishes of the French or British Government", since by doing so "he would materially strengthen himself with precisely the elements in the country and with the regions in the country which are mainly responsible for his election".

While it would be unwise to underrate the influences summarised above, it is well to remember that since this article was written German invincibility has been reduced to a fable at Verdun and elsewhere.

AMERICA AND THE WAR.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—One learns from the newspapers with imperfect sympathy that hungry Germany has been appealing to America for relief, and not appealing in vain. We find correspondence passing between Mr. Gerard, the U.S. Ambassador at Berlin, and the Chairman of the Relief Committee at New York, with regard to their mutual activities in the good cause.

It is on behalf of German widows and orphans, who are inadequately provided for by the German Government, that the U.S. officials are exerting themselves. One wonders if their services are confined to the relief of these poor people only, for this would be no easy matter to manage amidst present conditions in Germany.

We cannot forget, however, in this connection, that Germans themselves have never been given to the melting mood when the victims of war were concerned. When Paris was besieged in 1870, it doubtless numbered among its citizens many widows and orphans poorly enough provided for, but through all the stress and privation of that long siege not an atom of food did the Germans allow to reach them from without till the day came when the city was finally starved into surrender. It may be said that, on that occasion, the Germans did not transgress military usage. But what can be said for their recent behaviour? They have been stony-hearted towards Belgium, and have done barbarous, unspeakable things on land and sea. All the world wondered at their brutal, inhuman conduct. What a boon then it is for the Germans to have American friends who can throw over them the robe of respectability, who can ignore their ugly record, who can kindly alleviate for them the horrors of war, and supplement exiguous German pensions! But who could have expected, at this time of crisis, when the nations are at death-grips with Germany for the cause of civilization and freedom, to find the Great Republic, the home of freedom, chiefly concerned about doing a good turn to the Fatherland? Of course, the effect of this American work, so far as it extends, will be to prolong the war. It was thought at one time that Americans would be up in arms to vindicate their part in signing that forgotten scrap of paper, the treaty which guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium. It was also expected at different times that German ruthlessness at sea, which made no distinction between friend and foe, would goad them into war. But something—business, perhaps—has always forbidden any resort to disturbing, unsettling, warlike proceedings. And, indeed, it seems to-day that they never had any serious thought of war. At any rate, President Wilson now wants to know what we are fighting for. He can make nothing of it. In his anxiety for light upon the perplexing problem he wishes our reply to be distinct, definite, and crystal-clear. Well, we thought we had explained our objects in

the war scores of times, and in language level to the meanest capacity. But President Wilson is something of a word-catcher, and a mere verbal triumph has attractions for him. It is, however, only the German peace offer that is vague and hazy, and, we may add, worthy of no better reception than it has met with from the Allies.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

W. F.

PRAYERS FOR PRESIDENT WILSON IN THE TEMPLE CHURCH.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

London,

19 December 1916.

SIR,—Will you allow me as a representative of the American Newspaper Press, who, of course, was present, to set you right as to what the Master of the Temple said in his very gracious and timely words concerning President Wilson, just before the Benediction, Sunday morning four weeks ago? I noted his remarks: "As from the daily newspaper reports of the past week it is now certain that Dr. Wilson has been re-elected to the Presidency of the United States, and as it is almost certain that peace will be restored within the four years of his next term, in the arrangements for which he will in all probability have a part, I would ask the congregation to give a few moments of silent prayer that he may be guided and directed in all that he may be called on to do". Then, after a pause and the Benediction, the organ burst into "God Save the King".

It was doubtless quite a unique happening, and I sent word of it across the seas from Old England to the oldest and best-known daily paper in New England.

You are right, Mr. Wilson is not the kind of man to "butt in", and unless he is wanted by both sides he would hold his peace. But already he is doing his part manfully, and surely his country has a great interest, not to mention stake, in all future arrangements; for Uncle Sam has been a "powerful good friend" to the Allies.

I have the honour to be

"A LONDON CORRESPONDENT".

THE MAID MARVELLOUS.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

East Hayes, Cheltenham,

18 December 1916.

SIR,—I have just seen the review which you were kind enough to give in your columns on the 9th inst. to my little book on Joan of Arc, "The Maid Marvellous". It was treated throughout as a work intended to teach history to British children, and I would, therefore, venture to point out that, in the first place, the MS. was as a matter of fact completed ten days before war broke out; and that, in the second place, the book was by no means primarily intended for children, though the style, I hope, is of a simple sort which would be understood by some children or young people. My intention was to write a small, unambitious, but accurate monograph on the Maid, which might be a kind of medium course between, on the one hand, the few dry sentences in school text-books—which is all that many readers know about her—and, on the other hand, the huge, specialised tomes which most people have no wish to tackle. Had I intended to teach some historical episode to English children, and to teach it topically in connection with the present war, I should not have chosen such a peculiarly French subject. I was, however, at special pains to emphasise that the main responsibility rested, not with the English, but with the French king, the French generals, and the French clergy.

Yours truly,

M. HORSFALL.

THE DRAMA.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

18 December 1916.

SIR,—Just because the dramatic criticisms in the SATURDAY REVIEW are so discriminating, I am moved to hope you will print an observation on criticism in general, apropos of your article on "Dramatic Criticism as Usual".

Dramatists seek their encouragement in good work from the managers. The managers in turn seek theirs from the public, and I venture to say there isn't one of them in London who would not rather succeed with a good play than with a tawdry one. The public, in turn, is not a little influenced by the critics—not so much in its judgment of a play seen, but in its decision as to whether or not it shall venture out to see a new play. Now—and this is dangerous ground—has it not become more or less the custom of the critics in these war times to probe seriously only the plays of serious intention, pointing out their faults, with careful restraint of any show of enthusiasm for their virtues; and on the other hand to treat with good-natured uncritical tolerance plays that are below the requirements even of a public that is tired of anxiety and longs for a moment's relief, and glad to laugh at almost anything? Why be so shy about showing a little enthusiasm over occasional glimpses of imagination, beauty, humorous invention of freshly-observed human nature? Why, for example, was so little encouragement given to a comedy that contained all these and many other good qualities, only partly spoiled by lack of clearness in motive—Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's "The Mayor of Troy"? It would have been easy to revise that play into a success, but not enough encouragement was given to warrant the revision.

When any critic becomes so indifferent to whatever is good and so tolerant of whatever is not good that his reports on one and the other are about as like as two peas, isn't it time to get out and commune with nature until he can come back with the supreme courage to be contagiously enthusiastic whenever he can find a good excuse for it? The effect on public, managers and playwrights would be appreciable.

Another comment:—One-act plays are often the preparatory school of dramatists. Encouragement and appreciation of promising curtain-raisers would make all the difference to many a young playwright. Yet on the occasion of the production of a particularly good one-act comedy at the Haymarket the other night—Lieutenant Roland Pertwee's "Postal Orders"—five of the leading London critics—and I know not how many others—strolled in after it was over and made no comment on it.

Please don't think this is grumbling. I am not a playwright—only a playgoer.

X.

ONTARIO AND ALCOHOL.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

8, St. Martin's Street, Leicester Square, W.C.

11 December 1916.

SIR,—In your Notes last Saturday you say: "The intemperate prohibitionists by Act of Parliament . . . are urging a course which has not been taken by . . . Australia, South Africa or Canada". I know nothing about Australia or South Africa, but I do know that a fortnight ago a Canadian publisher assured me that in Toronto, and indeed in the whole Province of Ontario, it is impossible now to buy in the ordinary way "anything to drink"; that all bars, wine-merchants' and so on are closed, and that the only way to obtain it is to have it sent in from neighbouring provinces. I gathered from what he said that this was not a war-time measure, but that the Province had just gone "dry" in the same way as have several of the States of the Union.

Faithfully yours,
GRANT RICHARDS.

THE SONGS OF SERBIA.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—In regard to your correspondent's strictures upon the review of "Serbia in Light and Darkness", I should like to comment upon the point he raises, although a better procedure might be to refer him to mediæval chronicles and historical records of the country, for, be it noted, national ballads are never unadulterated history. They are an expression of history, not history itself. With their form must be accepted a poetic atmosphere, an element of fiction, a natural influence of time and of temperament. "A Ballad Student" will recall a song in which Richard Cœur de Lion is made to appear not only Crusader, but cannibal. And he will agree that that story also is told with "minute and life-like detail". It represents the mingling of historical fact and unhistorical fiction. "The Serbians", says Father Nicholai Velimirovic, "sang their glorious past, their dark present, and their hopes for the future. . . . They knew their history, and therefore they sang it; they sang it, and therefore they knew it better." It is important to realise that behind the national folk songs lay the historical facts that inspired them, whilst within them lay the ideals that are justified to-day in Serbia's attitude, in her patriotic and unconquerable soul.

It is shown by Serbian records that the Nemanja dynasty constituted through 300 years a flawless monarchy. My own allusion to the fact is based on historical data, but your correspondent is amazed and sceptical because he has failed to take such impression from the national songs.

You, Sir, would scarcely afford space in which to correct historically "A Ballad Student's" references to the Serbian heroes, or to analyse the ideals and mysticism that inform the Kossovo songs, yet in face of the contemptuous allusion to Saint Tsar Lazar I should wish to quote from a Serbian hymn to his praise: "Thou", it says, "hast been working for the beauty of God's glory and thou hast doubled the talent given to thee". As to the light in which the nation regarded his action on Kossovo Day, Father Nicholai should be heard again. In a memorable address delivered at St. Margaret's, Westminster, he said: "If you agree with me, that a man is always to be called victorious when he sacrifices his life to his ideals, and not the reverse, then you will agree with the whole Serbian nation in the sentiment that Tsar Lazar, who gave his life on Kossovo field for Christianity, was victorious. He was still more than an ordinary victor; he was a saint in life and in death. He lived for nation and religion; he died for religion and for nation. . . . The vision of Kossovo Day became for the suffering generations to come the most inspiring sources of strength and hopes. . . . In the dark night of slavery the Serbian people looked towards Kossovo as towards their greatest treasury . . . and over the whole ugliness of tyranny and slavery it stood as the perfect beauty."

Let us turn to the story of Ban George, John Hunniades, and the Sultan. Who now, it may be asked, could quarrel with George's decision to keep his own Church and Faith by the grace of the Turk rather than accept an (enforced) "gift" of "the beautiful Hungarian faith", together with (enforced) belief in the Pope of Rome?

To conclude, in what Serbian record or ballad can be found ground for the statement of "A Ballad Student" that the Serbians "received the coming of the Turks with equanimity"? Surely there is some misreading or misconception here?

The little Slav nation, always virile, soldierly and heroic, suffered rather than made for herself a violent past. None may hold a brief for her impeccability in that past, nor does she deny her faults. But to her praise be it said—it has been and is said—she and her rulers have often sinned, yet not sinfulness but saintliness they always kept as their ideal.

I am, Sir,
YOUR REVIEWER.

REVIEWS.

A GREAT LITTERATEUR.

"The Life and Letters of Theodore Watts-Dunton."
By Thomas Hake and Arthur Compton-Rickett, including some Personal Reminiscences by Clara Watts-Dunton. Jack. 30s. net.

[REVIEWED BY W. H. CHESSEON.]

AMID the illustrious men of the nineteenth century who survived into the twentieth Watts-Dunton is one upon whom the retrospective eye looks with peculiar pleasure. From the year (was it 1840?) when he walked rapturously into the world of rhythm and romance through the magic of Edmund Spenser to that June evening of 1914 when, with a newly-composed sonnet in his pocket, he quietly died upon his drawing-room lounge there was no hour when it could be said of him, mentally or physically, "he has outlived his life, and is extant". Born under the appropriate sign of the Balance, he was a critic whose consciousness of the difference between the praiseworthy and the perfect was constant in opposing his progress in popularity. Prophesying that a time would come when even the greatest English art of his time and previous times would be utterly disregarded, he naturally had leisure to spare for the pleasures of a spectator in Vanity Fair and for the joys of friendship. We know him as Rossetti's "Oraculum of the hay-field" and "hero of friendship", as the "worldling" of Whistler's definition, as the paradoxically youthful lover of his wife's reminiscences, and as the artist in words, the judge of literature. No sooner was he dead than the literary Man in the Street began to imagine a banquet of anecdote, not devoid of spice or condiments, called "Life" or "Memoirs".

It must be confessed that the official work now before us is not ideal in its ministration to curiosity. It is tactful to an almost provoking extent, for Henley (notoriously an antagonist) appears in it merely as a friend; and yet it is not tactful enough, since the biographers have quite unnecessarily printed a contribution which in footnotes indulges in stupid disparagement of Swinburne's poetry, and damaging criticism of Watts-Dunton's critical work, from a pen that in Watts-Dunton's lifetime wrote excellent sonnets in his praise. The misprints are not apparently numerous; they include an appalling misprint of Wordsworth's celebrated description of Chatterton, a misremembrance of Swinburne's line: "Night hath none but one red star—Tyrannicide", and certain strange mistakes in nomenclature and spelling. It may be added in this connection that, whether or no his pen blundered, Watts-Dunton would not have printed the first and second sentences of the last paragraph on p. 196, Vol. I., in their present state, and it is safe to say that he intended to write the word "biographies", not "biographer", on line 7, p. 34, Vol. II. The biographers' style is usually of the easy variety known as pedestrian; we owe them no grudge for that. The publishers have given the book a good appearance, and several excellent illustrations, including a reproduction of Rossetti's "Spirit of the Rainbow", of which it is rashly averred that it is the only nude form drawn by that artist.

Returning to the book from the point of view of the diner-out seeking good stories and the lover of literature seeking brilliant letters, it is not as satisfying as it should be. Where, for instance, is "one of the best prose delineations of Nature" Watts-Dunton ever read, which Swinburne gave to him in a letter from Chestal in 1894? The biographers simply omit it after deliberately whetting our appetite. If Watts-Dunton was faithful to his cherishing instinct, there must be enough interesting letters left out of this book to provide a future feast of equal dimensions.

Meanwhile we are glad to have incorporated in Watts-Dunton's biography some very interesting examples of his forgotten or hitherto unpublished work. A specimen of epistolary humour by him, written at St. Ives in 1855 at the expense of a "Mutual Improvement Society", has a flavour quite individual; and a farce, "Cleopatra's Needle",

though tiresomely preposterous in plot, has some admirable bits of dialogue. The description of a sunrise which Watts-Dunton induced Christina Rossetti to see with him is charming, and his literary sketches of that poet and Borrow are admirably vivid. The thrilling sonnet, "Suspense", printed by Mrs. Watts-Dunton in her really vital and revealing narrative of friendship and love, shows that his craftsmanship in verse at the close of his worldly career was as clever as ever it was.

It can scarcely be doubted that Watts-Dunton possessed all the faculties that enable a man to be what is called a great writer; the trouble with him was that he saw Perfection in a series of mirages. Hence satisfaction in long work seemed unattainable for him, and he presents the strange, but decidedly distinguished, spectacle of a man who shrank from any success which was not confirmed by his private opinion. Thus "Balmoral", a novel written by him in 1870, was never published, though the well-known novelist, F. W. Robinson, was "unequivocally favourable" to it. The procrastination which delayed the appearance of "Aylwin" for many years after its birth cannot be explained by sensitiveness to outside criticism, though our biographers lay much stress upon it. The individual who was brave enough as a boy to learn how to defend himself by submitting his head to the thumping virtuosity of a huge negro was assuredly not deficient in pluck. It would seem rather that the critic in him uttered a sighing *Cui bono?* in contemplating the toils attendant on the attainment of perfection in imaginative work—toils harder for one who evades the manual and ocular exertions of the author without a secretary. His sometimes exquisite and often excellent poetry he seems to have put forth without excessive qualms, and it is probable that in the future he will be best known by such beautiful trifles as "To Pierrot in Love".

He was not fond of irony, and he was so sensitive to woe that he said: "I would not have read [*De Profundis*], by Oscar Wilde] on any account if I had known its enormous power to enslave my imagination". The present writer remembers that Watts-Dunton refused the epithet "genius" to a mind capable only of witty brilliance and perfection of literary form for the conveyance of wit. He had a passion for beauty, and of ugliness in a female iconoclast's face he would say that it made him wish to "vomit". He could not artistically rejoice in the spectacle of Ugliness going about as a reforming missionary. Certainly his own forte was not the weaving of elegant patterns out of the ugliness in motion around him. It is noteworthy that he found Mr. Hardy's poetry not artistic enough, and that he regarded Browning as less profound than Tennyson, who, by the way, could induce him to alter a line of verse to the disadvantage of its expressiveness. He enjoyed novels warranted to thrill: "Jane Eyre" was a great favourite; and he, conscious of prophecy or not, on the last day of his life drew attention to a passage in "Hard Cash" which mentions the time (6.25 p.m.) at or very near which his discarnation occurred.

But a man's ideal of art and his recreations are two different things, and we may be sure that to express in literature his limited but exquisite idea of beauty, and his divine optimism with regard to love, which shone from his correspondence with all who pleased him, was the chief æsthetic aim of a man whose chosen work of regularity was the criticism of poetic art.

Owing to the fact that daily papers may be trusted, in-journalistic slang, to "gut" a book of personalities, we have quoted little of the ana of these volumes. We think the letters by Swinburne and Mr. William Watson the most interesting novelties in them, apart from Watts-Dunton's writings. Admirers of "A Dark Month" will note that Master Bertie Mason, Watts-Dunton's nephew, was the "King" to whom Swinburne paid the tribute of unique verse. Swinburne's charming confession of love for a washer-woman's infant daughter deserves a place in Mr. Lucas's "Third Post" if that anthology should ever

arrive. The peeps at Dante Rossetti allowed us are fascinating and informing.

WAR-BROKEN AND WITTY.

"Wounded and a Prisoner of War." By an Exchanged Officer. With Illustrations. Blackwood. 5s. net.

"The Wards in War Time." By a Red Cross Pro. Same publisher. 5s. net.

THE House of Blackwood, which has done much to illuminate the war in far distant regions, has now given us two books on more familiar themes, books which hold their own well among their competitors by virtue of their style, humour, and sense of vision. "An Exchanged Officer" wins us at once by his feeling for landscape and his relish for the humours of French and English meeting with the utmost goodwill, but hampered by the lack of a common language. The officer knows French well, and records with an easy touch the tribute of surprise paid in France to "le kilt". He was suddenly introduced to the realities of war in the Battle of Mons, where his men were cheered at the outset by discovering that a slow-moving, dark-grey body on the edge of a ditch belonged to a donkey, not to a German. The donkey made the situation "normal", yet it was not one that could be called felicitous:—

"Our position at Hyon, important because it dominated the line of retreat, was weakly held. We had practically no supports. The German superiority at that part of the line was probably about three to one in guns, and five or more to one in men.

"The enemy attacked vigorously, met with an unexpectedly vigorous resistance, hesitated, failed to push their action home, and lost an opportunity which seldom occurred again—an opportunity which has now gone for ever.

"With half the determination shown at Verdun, the Germans could have captured our position with comparatively trifling loss, turned our flank, and disorganised the preparation for retreat."

The details of fighting and retirement are portrayed by a singularly observant pen. They include the story of a heavyweight boxing champion who came out on the landing of a house, unarmed, to meet a crowd of Germans advancing upstairs, crashed a big sofa on their heads, and escaped. In the midst of a desperate resistance the author received a blow that might have come from a sledge-hammer; a voice said, "Mr. H. has got it", and shortly repeated, "Mr. H. is killed". But Mr. H. was not killed, and believes that, though Red Cross books call brandy the worst thing for head wounds, a flask-full of that stimulant poured down his throat saved his life. The two soldiers who tended him on the battlefield were loath to leave him, and at first refused the order to rejoin their battalion, but he ordered them off himself, and so, after a night passed slowly in a little wood among the beetroots, he was met in an exhausted and paralysed state by the German soldiers, but finally retrieved by the French Red Cross. His death was again announced in his hearing, and he received Extreme Unction. Later, in the Civil Hospital of Cambrai, he was under German domination, and he notes that the British wounded transported to Germany were disguised, as far as possible, in French uniforms, since in the early days of the war British prisoners invariably received the worst treatment, being made the object of special contempt, neglect, or cruelty. One day the hospital became definitely German instead of French. The Germans imposed their authority on everybody, except a young, but determined, French nurse who declared that she would have no Schwester to interfere with her work, locked a room up and put the keys in her pocket. She was indispensable and she won.

The author, with the friendly aid of French nurses, appeared to be worse than he was, and did not figure among the "transportables" to Germany. The scenes in his hospital are sufficiently terrible, and we turn with relief to such details as the description of "Tabac

Belge", cigars at three sous for two. The author once dissected one.

"The outside leaf was cabbage, stained dark brown; it came off quite easily and disclosed a second and third cabbage leaf of a light yellow colour. Inside these three layers of cabbage leaf was a hard rolled cylinder which, as it would not unroll, I cut into two pieces with a sharp knife. The cylinder was filled with small shavings and dust, whether from fag-ends of cigarettes or merely from street sweepings it was impossible to tell. I have seen a soldier achieve the wonderful feat of smoking one of these cigars to its hot and bitter end. This was Picard, the one-legged man of Sallencinq. Picard, who smoked all day and most of the night, quite indifferent as to the substance he put into his clay pipe as long as it would produce smoke."

After four months in hospital the author was taken to Würzburg. Thereafter his experiences are what we have learnt to expect. But he was great-hearted, and capable of giving as good as he got in the way of retorts and compliments. England was, of course, declared to be the aggressor and originator of all the trouble, attacking, for no apparent reason, a pacific, industrial country like Germany! The author generally contented himself with asking such denouncers of English behaviour whether "they thought we had prepared an Expeditionary Force of 70,000 men to attack 7,000,000 Germans". A half-paralysed man, he was confined in a fortress, had a hard straw bed, and was not allowed to buy a mattress. Unable even to stand without crutches, he was reprimanded for not saluting a German official. The few instances of kindness are welcome in the narrative, and they increase at the end, as prisoners should go home contented with a cordial report of their treatment.

The volume is full of cheery touches, but no reader should miss its serious side. What the writer says of the power of German patriotism is well worth attention, though he wrote at a time when our Army still depended on the voluntary system with its cajoleries and other fetching ways.

It is a great change from the incidents inseparable from German ideas of warfare and humanity to the trim comfort of an English military hospital. But the book of "The Wards in War Time" is full also of humour, which, by a happy paradox, war seems to have developed abundantly in our soldiers and those who work incessantly to make their life easier. The "Red Cross Pro." has written these sketches in the scanty moments of "off duty" from the wards, and we can quite believe that, though the characters are fictitious, the incidents and conversations reported are veracious. The scanty leisure has not produced a slipshod style; the writing of the book is clear and effective, the only lapse we have noticed being in the plural of that word in Latin.

The large military hospital, which is the main scene of the author's labours, reveals many notable characters—the educated Scotchman, the charmingly wild Irishman, the man who lives for his bottle of stout, the Head Sister, with a hawk-like eye and a great sense of dignity, and the dear old lady who carefully distributes one cigarette all round. Regulations are sometimes a trial for unreflective patients, and often, we imagine, for reflective nurses, still more for probationers who are told one minute to sterilise the scissors by boiling them, and the next not to ruin them by any such process. Spring-cleaning is endemic and may be a particularly vexatious occupation in July.

The orderlies who were lately civilians, and in more lucrative days hewers of coal, receive 1s. 10d. a day for long hours, much scrubbing and carrying, and other menial work. They rouse at 6 a.m. all patients not confined to bed; the porridge arrives at 7.30, but we read nothing of the trial we heard of in the last hospital we visited, the mouth-wash all round long before the hour of breakfast. The eggs despatched by a generous British public to the wounded bear inscriptions, sometimes a text or a prayer, and sometimes even verses. Who, we wonder, devised the brilliant hospital suits, the blue coat and trousers, red tie and white shirt?

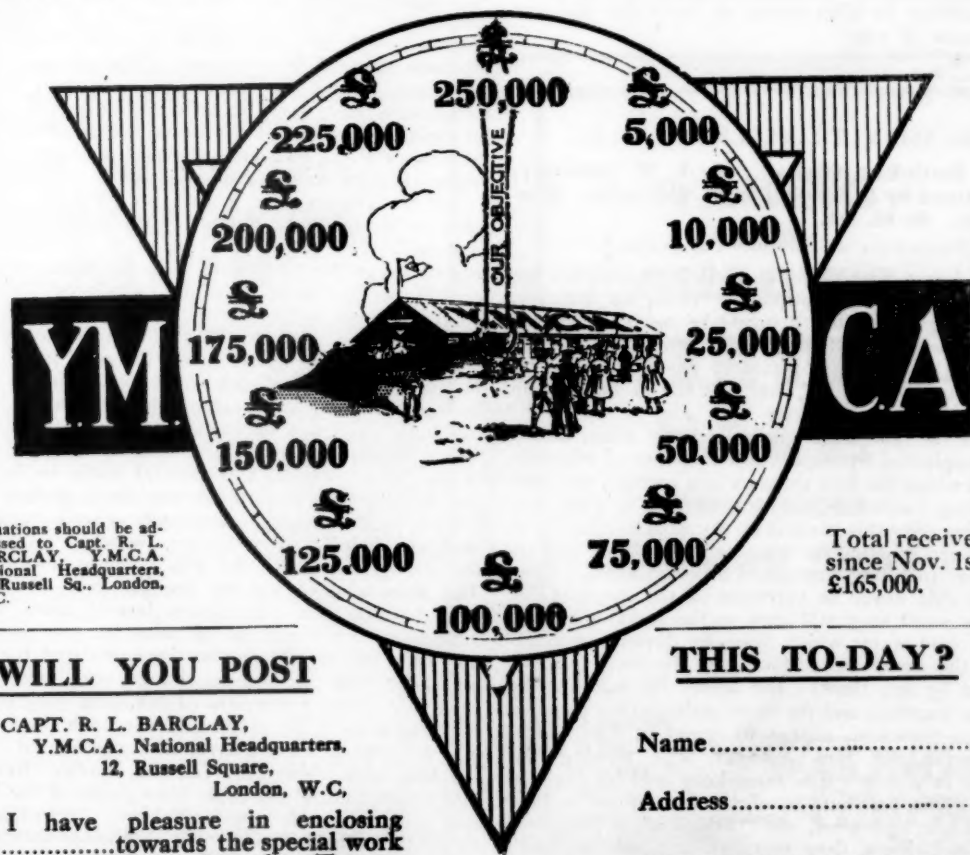
Will the Clock Strike to time

ONLY a few days remain in which to complete the fund of £250,000, so urgently needed by the Y.M.C.A.

Already the splendid sum of £165,000 has been raised since November the first, but, if our brave lads are to have the facilities and comforts which are being prepared for them another £85,000 must be received by New Year's Day. Will you help to make the clock strike to time?

If the men, tired and mudstained from the trenches, knocked at your door to-night, how gladly you would admit them to the warmth and comfort of your home! But our brave fellows are not less truly calling to you from the trenches for the facilities and comforts which the Y.M.C.A. are ready to provide.

Will you not respond by sending your own gift to-day?



They symbolise, according to the ingenious author, the national colours, and—a more important point for the wearer—make surreptitious drinks impossible.

Visitors are treated in a lively chapter, and, when it is a meenister from London asked by a meenister in Paisley to keep an eye on a patient, the latter, we gather, flies to the bath-room as a place of refuge. Then there are the "cousins" from the neighbourhood who get in somehow and gather round the popular warriors:—

"Their behaviour is almost always the same. They sit jauntily on the edge of the bed, supremely conscious of their best clothes, until chased off by an indignant nurse. Then they subside into a chair, drawn as close to the patient's bed as possible. They come laden with boxes of indifferent chocolates and enormous bunches of crudely-coloured flowers, as offerings to the wounded, and their conversational powers consist of whispers punctuated by giggles, if they are enjoying a *tête-à-tête*, or talking at the top of their voices in parties of five or six." The chief amusement is the gramophone, which goes on playing relentlessly as long as it is allowed.

The ways of the malingeringer are most ingenious, but the wiles of the doctor are too much for him when he pretends bad eyesight. Still he proceeds with his astute inventions, but this amusing chapter, with its excellent climax, must be left to the reader. Everywhere the book tempts us to quote, but we must content ourselves with a significant passage from the ending:—

"Day by day in hospital pain is borne in silence with unflinching courage. No better testimony could be paid to the British soldier's bravery than the chance remark of a Staff Nurse fresh from the wards of a civil hospital. Towards the close of her first afternoon she turned to the probationer and said, 'Do you know, nurse, it strikes me as strange, I have been here all the afternoon and nobody has asked for anything and nobody has complained. In civil hospitals the patients are wanting things all day long.'"

There it is, the resolute, uncomplaining spirit of our Army, a spirit which has taught us that there is something ennobling in what seems at times the idle and endless waste of war.

A RUSSIAN TRAVELLER'S TALES.

"In Far North-East Siberia." By I. W. Shklovsky. Translated by L. Edwards and Z. Shklovsky. Macmillan. 8s. 6d. net.

[REVIEWED BY BISHOP FRODSHAM.]

SIBERIA is a country which constantly stultifies the most confident expectations. Who, for instance, would have guessed that it might be more unpleasant to travel towards far Kolyma in summer than in the white twilight of winter's sunless days? But Arctic facts are stubborn things, and Kolyma is well within the Arctic circle.

Imagine a boundless plain, whose even, mossy ground is splashed by huge whitish patches of reindeer-moss into which the foot sinks as in a sponge, the footprints filling immediately with water. The only way of travelling over this plain is on horseback—that is, in summer—and picking a way over an Irish bog is child's play to riding through a Siberian moss. Even if a man ride never so carefully in the steps of his guide, his steed may still sink to the saddle-girths in the rusty cold water which flows by devious channels between the deceptive surface and the rocky subsoil untouched by any thaw. The hotter the summer the deeper the marshes, and the more perilous they become. If anyone, therefore, wishes to travel in Far North-East Siberia, let him consider well making the adventure in winter. The razor-keen cold by day and the comfortless rest huts by night, with all perils from ice and snow and wind, are "trifles when compared with flooded rivers, deep marshes, and mosquitoes". This, at least, is Mr. Shklovsky's judgment.

The introduction of mosquitoes into the triad of summer perils sounds like an anti-climax to those who

have not seen Siberia. The Yakuts call mosquitoes "children of the devil" and say they "begin to feed on man" on 13 June. Mr. Shklovsky, for his sins, commenced one of his journeys on this anthrophagous anniversary. This is his experience. "The white cruppers of the horses were black with the insects which settled on them, and above us the mosquitoes hung like a black cloud. At first our horses plunged, reared, and rolled on the ground, trying to get rid of the torturers; but, finding all attempts useless, they resigned themselves to fate. The drooping heads and mournful eyes of the poor animals expressed the depths of despair. Nets, gloves, and thick coats formed only a temporary protection from the mosquitoes. At each halting-place we made a huge smoky fire, near which our horses remained all the time; but even this did not help much, for if for one moment the wind swayed the column of thick white smoke, whose acrid fumes choked us and burnt our throats, instantly the mosquitoes settled again upon us." It takes much to conquer the Siberian pony. He is at once the bravest and most unfriendly of horses. Therefore the measure of his distress is the measure of the mosquitoes' domination. Fortunately, the mosquitoes' reign is little more than two months; otherwise, no flesh could exist before them. Mr. Shklovsky's travels took place twenty-five years ago, but a quarter of a century counts for little in Far North-East Siberia either with mosquitoes or man.

The Yakuts are a kind and cheerful folk, despite their grim animal struggle for existence. Fish is their staple food, and their storehouses become exhausted usually a month or six weeks before the next fishing season commences. The rivers are not free from ice until the beginning of June, and during May the unhappy folk are forced to such malnutritious food as leather leggings and eel-skin window-panes. There is no merry month of maying in Yakutsk. May is a time of torture. In June the flooding of the rivers bursts the thick slabs of ice, raising them mountain-wise along the banks. Then there is fish beyond the dreams of avarice. Men and dogs eat and are satisfied. Incidentally, fishing and love-making go together in Yakutsk—but here Mr. Shklovsky must be left to tell his own story in his own way. There is a good deal of human nature in the Yakuts, and their marriage ceremonies have some scientific interest; but a recital of their matrimonial affairs would not be edifying, even to readers of the SATURDAY REVIEW, who know how to make allowances for savage races.

Let the globe-trotter beware lest he leave the flesh-pots of his favourite hotels for the fish-kettles of far Kolyma! The Yakuts are hospitality itself, and to our Russian traveller their huts, in comparison with what he left outside them in winter, appeared "the most ideal dwellings in the world". His description of his entry into one ideal dwelling-place at Maloi, the first station down the great river Kolyma from Sredne Kolymsk, is too good to leave untold. He was butted in from behind. His polar clothes had made him far too bulky to enter between the doorposts otherwise. When inside, the atmosphere had the warm pungency of the byre. Behind the chimney could be heard the low mooing of a cow, while two little spotted calves, "with heads resting upon each other's necks" (a position difficult to visualise), watched wonderingly the strange intruder. All was a bustle of hospitality. The women piled up the fire for tea. "Our host helped to detach our frozen beards from the fur mufflers and to help us off with our fur shirts, an operation not at all easy for inexperienced travellers; and after this we had to change our boots and to remove our outer trousers of fur, and only when all this was done could we at last approach the fireplace, where a broad, roaring river of flame burned away in the low, wide chimney. Tea was ready. Everybody was called, and on the table were plates of rye biscuits and a plate of little pieces of sugar. It was amusing to see the collection of utensils that made their appearance. One Yakut drank from a wooden cup, another from a scoop, another from a plate, another from a piece of broken pomade pot, by some miracle trans-

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There are millions of suffering Jews to be cared for. Your gift will be cordially welcomed, and may be sent either to the Manager of "The Saturday Review" or to the Hon. Secretary, Russian Jews Relief Fund, 122 George Street, Edinburgh. Christian Friends desiring to help may obtain collecting cards at the latter address.

To every donor of 5s. and upwards a copy of either "How THE TURK MAKES WAR" or "THE JEWISH PROBLEM AND THE WORLD WAR," both by Leon Levison, will be sent free of charge. These booklets are an enlightening exposure of what happened and is happening in the East at the present time.

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ported here, and another drank from the frying-pan, regardless of the traces of fish fat in it."

There can be no doubt that Mr. Shklovsky thoroughly enjoyed himself, as indeed did his friend, Mitrofan Daourov, but he is wise in advising the fastidious not to look at the after-dinner ceremonies of cleaning up the cauldron. "The hostess first takes out all the bones, which she gives to the children; after that she scoops out with a flat horn spoon as much as possible of what is left, but round the sides and bottom were left traces of the food, traces which no spoon could remove. But this matter is very easily remedied. Fingers are called into requisition for this—fingers whose cleanliness leaves much to be desired. At last even fingers cannot remove any more, but the Yakuts still suspect the existence of some nourishing elements on the sides of the cauldron, and tongues now come into action. This is the children's business. Some red-cheeked, slant-eyed Bouksan or Amoukchan or Itiniak, on whose flat, short-nosed, dirty face garden produce might have been sown, puts his shaggy head into the cauldron and begins to lick it with scrupulous care. After this last operation you can wager that not the least trace of food remains in the cauldron."

No apologies will be needed for the lengthy extracts. They have been given to show the humorous quality of our Russian traveller's tales and the lively excellence of his translators' work; but the penalty exacted is curtailment of space to write adequately of other interesting things, and they are many. For instance, in the matter of folklore Mr. Shklovsky has quite a nice Arctic variety of the Man in the Moon story; only in Yakutsk it is not a man, but a girl—a girl who ached for sympathy, and now regrets that ever she got it! There is also much worth telling about the mammoths whose tusks reach Europe, and whose carcases form food for the Yakuts and their dogs. The conditions of the gold-mining camps on the Lena River form another interesting subject. These conditions have changed for the better—much for the better of late years—but in nothing have they been more benefited than by the breaking of the authority of the storekeeper kings, who once took good care that not a single gold-miner could leave the place without also leaving behind "the fruits of his long toil". In short, this is one of the most fascinating books of travel published for many a long day. It is all the more welcome in England because it is the work of a Russian.

THE JEW IN FICTION.

"Mendel." By Gilbert Cannan. Unwin. 6s.

MR. GILBERT CANNAN'S reputation as a novelist is already made. If it were not this novel would be enough to place him among the little band of fiction-writers of to-day who count. "Mendel" is a fearless piece of work. It has grip and power, shrewd observation, and clear-cut thought. Sloppiness, sentiment and gush—the three distinguishing traits of so many modern novels—are absent. The writer knows what he wants to say and knows how to say it. Mr. Cannan works close to life. His book is realism, but realism of the right kind, not the foul and glaring stuff that passes under the name, but truth tempered by sympathetic understanding.

The author's achievement is all the more notable because his subject-matter is by no means promising. Mendel, the young Austrian-Jew artist, brought up amidst the squalor of Whitechapel, is not an ideal hero for a novel. He has all the faults of his upbringing and race. He is underbred, sensual, vain, and greedy. And yet, in spite of all these disadvantages, Mr. Cannan is able to make of him an engaging figure, tinged with a certain heroism and nobility that redeem his blemishes. He is intensely human and alive. We feel that he is real and, without the author insisting upon the point, we realise his attraction and magnetism. This is only to say that Mr. Cannan has fulfilled his purpose, for otherwise the book would be unreadable, since it stands or falls by the character of Mendel. The novel is long. It

runs to over 400 pages, and only brings us to Mendel at the age of twenty-one. It closes abruptly, leaving us wondering, as the author intends we shall wonder what will be the end of this stormy, feverish personality who has crowded so much achievement and emotion into his short life. There is no finality about it, and therein some may find cause for complaint. But it is a page torn from life as Mr. Cannan sees it, and he is not concerned to round off events to suit the average reader's palate.

The life of the artist and Bohemian London have been the subject of many novels, but Mr. Cannan has his own method of treating it. If there seems a superabundance of art talk and the jargon of modern painters, an over-preoccupation with sexual matters, it is because they are incidental to the life he describes. Mendel, with his passion for truth—"even in falsehood he was sincere"—was bound to hurt himself badly when, by the circumstances of his success, he was brought into touch with the conventions of the world. Apart from Mendel there are some fine little cameos in the book. Logan, with his eternal art talk and utter lack of scruples, is excellently portrayed, as is also another minor character, Mr. Tilney Tysoe, who was an idealist and "had no other profession." With women Mr. Cannan is not always so successful, but two stand out clear-cut: Morrison, nymph-like and paradoxical, whom Mendel loves; and Mendel's mother, a Jewess who, in spite of a cramped life of sordid poverty, retains her fineness. Both of these are real creations, and, like Mendel himself, will live in the memory of the reader.

LATEST BOOKS.

"The Gate of Asia." By W. Warfield. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 22s. (12s. 6d. net in England.)

Draw an irregular line from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, and you have what Mr. Warfield considers, not without reason, to be the Gate of Asia. It is a wide gate. An Englishman might have preferred another and more accurate name. But across this line, from the earliest dawn of human history, great armies have marched and counter-marched. Time after time in the past the savage hordes of Asia have entered between the suppositional gateposts to invade Europe. During the last two years the English and the Russians have endeavoured, at either side of the gate, to overturn the more than Asiatic savagery of Germany and Turkey.

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